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Reasonable apprehensions and
Reassuring hints

REASONABLE APPREHENSIONS

AND

REASSURING HINTS.

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REASSURING HINTS

BEING

*Papers designed to Attract Attention to the Nature of
Modern Unbelief, and to meet some of its
Fundamental Assumptions.*

BY

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THIRD EDITION.

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PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION.

I AM induced to respond to the call for another Edition of this book. The present volume will be found, I trust, not less convenient for the hand, and less trying to the eyes, than that of the Second Edition, while its price, intermediate between the two, will still render it accessible to those who may care to permanently possess the work.

I take this opportunity of saying that I am much indebted to my numerous critics, not excepting those who have spoken from the standpoint of conscious (and by me readily acknowledged) superiority, both as metaphysicians and as theologians, to myself. But, as those who have read my more recent and more carefully thought-out papers on "Ethics and Theology" may have noticed, I have not seen any reason to

alter my convictions, upon the main subject, to any important extent.

The only modification of view which seems worth mentioning, as one of which I am conscious, is that respecting "Nature" and Natural Theology. After five years of further thought, and notwithstanding a more careful study of Hartmann's trenchant "Philosophy of the Unconscious," I am less depressed by the prospects of Pessimism, and more hopeful of Natural Theology, than I was.

Dr. Martineau's "Study of Religion," to which I last spring called the attention of the junior clergy of the diocese of Durham, should, I may here add, be studied—carefully read, analyzed, and then read again—by those who are disposed to despair of the future of Natural Theology. *

HENRY FOOTMAN.

NOCTON, 1888.

* Students of Professor Flint's works, who may get a little puzzled in places, will find Martineau's book very useful. The two authors might be read together with advantage. As to *critical difficulties*, Row's "Bampton Lectures," especially lectures v. and vi., are invaluable helps, which no student of Evidences can afford to neglect.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

“ This is perhaps the calmest, the most courageous, and the steadiest effort to look Modern Unbelief in the face, which we have yet had from a clergyman of the Church of England. . . . There is, in this little book, a resolution to see the worst of his opponents’ case, and to see it without hysterics or affected horror, which gives us the greatest confidence in his judgment. . . . It would be hard to sum up the modern argument *against* divine design in creation, we think, more forcibly than Mr. Footman manages it. . . . Nor do we think it would be possible to meet the force of that statement more powerfully and wisely than Mr. Footman meets it.”—*The Spectator*, April 21st, 1883.

“ He is quite above the cheap device of setting up an infidel of his own manufacture, to be knocked over with triumphant ease. . . . The book, as a whole, deserves great praise for clearness, vigour, and honesty.”—*The Athenæum*, August 25th, 1883.

“ The whole of the book derives its interest and value especially from being so evidently at first-hand. Mr. Footman has read, it is true, and read widely. But he has not compiled. He has thought and felt, and gives us what he has felt and thought for himself. He gives his own ‘hints,’ not as a panoply of ready-made theistic and Christian apology, but as a specimen of the method of personal grappling with the subject — the only one adequate to the nature and gravity of its problems. . . . The style is simple, unaffected, and at times eloquent. And Mr. Footman has the merit of acting upon, and urging upon all of us, the spirit of Aristotle’s golden principle, that what persuades men is not argument but personality. Every clergyman is liable to be confronted with these problems in his daily work. Would that all were as well prepared and disciplined for the ordeal as Mr. Footman. A conscientious thinker himself, he can face candidly and carefully the true bearing of modern scientific thought. He sees the points where the weight of the Christian position must be thrown.”—*The Guardian*, September 12th, 1883.

“ A contribution of solid value to apologetic literature. . . .
 “ While there are tokens that Mr. Footman has been much
 “ influenced by the teaching of Frederick Denison Maurice,
 “ yet he possesses the gift in which that eminent man was
 “ lacking,—that of translating the language of the higher
 “ metaphysic into a tongue understandable by those who
 “ have little aptitude for pure speculation.”—*The Literary
 Churchman*, June 22nd, 1883.

“ There are, however, many persons who have neither the
 “ time nor the inclination to study lengthy treatises, who yet
 “ need to be put on their guard as to the assaults now being
 “ made on the very foundations of the Christian faith, and
 “ the defence which may be made on behalf of the truth : for
 “ such persons there could hardly be a better book. . . . We
 “ have had occasion recently to complain of the awkward
 “ and affected style in which some of our able Christian
 “ apologists have put forth their defence of the Gospel. It
 “ is a great relief to turn to the pure, nervous, gentlemanlike
 “ English of this volume.”—*Church Bells*, May 19th, 1883.

“ One of the most useful and able exposures and refutations
 “ of modern infidelity and atheism we have seen, especially
 “ that of the Bradlaugh and Besant type.”—*The National
 Church*, April, 1883.

“ Will be read with much interest, even by those who have
 “ become weary of the subject as usually treated.”—*The
 Christian Chronicle*, March 29th, 1883.

“ The Reassuring Hints are the pleasantest reading on
 “ what are otherwise dry topics, that we have come across ;
 “ and Mr. Footman, despite the modest limits of his two
 “ lectures, touches with a sweeping and powerful familiarity
 “ almost every difference and difficulty which modern science
 “ has raised. He invariably puts his opponents' case better
 “ than they could put it themselves.”—*The Church Review*,
 April 27th, 1883.

“ We earnestly commend the book ; it is the book of a
 “ clergyman who ‘ reads,’ and we are sure that he at least is
 “ not likely to lose touch of the lay mind.”—*The Record*,
 May 25th, 1883.

“ Two remarkable papers . . . calculated to make the
 “ most desultory reader pause.”—*The Clergyman's Magazine*,
 September, 1883.

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PAPER I.

REASONABLE APPREHENSIONS, GROUNDED
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WERE I not here through the reiterated invitation of your Secretary, I should certainly feel that this paper was an impertinence. But, as it is, I fall back upon that invitation, as my plea for forgiveness if, after all, it should turn out that I have but little of interest to say.

The subject which has been assigned me is one which is far too vast for even a hasty treatment in an essay of this kind. I have had therefore to make a choice among the many and embarrassingly various materials which lie ready to hand, and which might be referred to in illustration of the nature and prevalence among us of a widespread and a loudly expressed unbelief.

The Unbelief of the present day goes deep down to the roots of all spiritual life, as well as into wide fields of human speculation. It is *practical* too, and declines to admit that it is incapable of supplying the world with a Basis

of Morals, and an Object of Worship, and an end of Being, which shall in the long-run more than compensate mankind at large for their loss of faith in the worn-out theologies and supernaturalisms of Priest or Intuitionalist.

I hope that in what I am about to say I shall be fair to the Unbelief and to the unbelievers of the day. I will not confine myself to mere descriptions or general statements as to the spirit of the age, but *quote* men who are influencing both the educated and the uneducated classes at this hour. I will quote not merely from treatises addressed to the leisurely or the learned few, but from popular lectures and tracts addressed on Sundays and week-days to the eager and untrained multitudes. I shall claim for such quotations that they are fairly representative, although they have not the least pretension to being exhaustive or free from the charge of leaving out some great names or some influential exponents of Scepticisms or of Atheisms, which are both popular and plausible.

This method will have the further advantage of helping us to know what is really said, not merely to know about it. And this, as it seems to me, is a very important gain to any man who really wishes to appreciate the force and subtlety of the attacks to which the minds of men are now daily exposed.

We have a general notion that the spirit of the age, the leaders of the thought of this time, and the retailers of those thoughts to the populace, are against us. Unbelief is, as we say, "in the air." Articles and pamphlets, like threatening letters, are flying over the land, and when we hear of them, we shudder and pass on. But let us try sometimes to treat them as threatening letters which we have actually ourselves received, and then their due significance, and the nature of their influence and the terrible plainness of their speech will come home to us more effectually, and arouse us permanently, and I hope profitably, to an abiding sense of the conditions of thought under which thousands of men and hundreds of women, to whom we are commissioned to minister, are living.

An incident will illustrate my meaning. I remember going down into the poorer parts of my London parish one evening to a Mission service. I went with a generally diffused feeling about me that an Atheistic Progressive Club, within a few yards of the Mission church, was exercising an influence which would lessen the number of the congregation, or reduce it to women and children; and that, so to speak, the public opinion of the district would not be likely to sympathize with any enthusiasms of godliness. At the door of a house as I passed, and which the

in-coming congregation were in the act of passing, stood a woman with her children. She called out, "*Going there?* No, thank you! I am not going to listen to parsons telling a *heap of lies.*"

I felt that I realized better, after that blunt speech, the actual forces which were against me. It helped to relieve my mind of any vagueness which might have hung over it, and in which the subject of popular infidelity might have been enveloped. It was unpleasant, but indispensable. Some analogous course of listening to quotations from other and more dangerous antagonists may not be without some corresponding utility on the present occasion.

The possibility of this benefit accruing to us from contact with the actual words of the setters forth of the new gods of Kraft and Stoff—or of an Ideal, Headless, unproducible Divinity—must be my excuse for any unpleasant sensations which this contact may create in the minds of my present listeners.

I.

I will call your attention first to the posthumous work of one who is now looked upon by many of his more advanced admirers as having been too indulgent to some of the received traditions of mankind—as having rather blessed than cursed

the enemy — but who has most powerfully influenced the mind of a very large class of educated men and women, many of whom are now in positions of great influence, or distinguished in the arena of public affairs. *John Stuart Mill* exercised an immense influence during his life, and although generally shrouding his religious opinions from public gaze, was always felt to be what I may venture to call an anti-theological force in the world of thought. I remember walking some years ago in Cambridge with two men who have since shown themselves capable of doing great things, when one of them informed me that “there would be a tremendous explosive soon cast into your camp. J. S. Mill has written some Essays on Religion, and you had better look out for a destructive blow.”

“Whom do you mean?” I said, “to whom is your warning specially addressed?”

“*To you,*” he replied, “who seem to think that you have got a boot that will fit every foot, which you call Christianity.”

Well, now I want to refer for a few minutes to this explosive shell—which fell from the hand of Mill in the form of *Three Essays on Religion* after his death, and which contains, beyond a doubt, some of the calmest and most honest statements of deep individual conviction, and want of conviction, which the present generation has seen.

He sums up the case as it stood, not only in his own mind, but as it appears to many, and I fear I might say, the majority of the men of light and leading in Physics and in Philosophy among us now.

(1) As to *Physical Science* :

“The progress of Physical Science is considered to have established, by conclusive evidence, matters of fact with which the religious traditions of mankind are not reconcilable.”

(2) “The Science of *human nature and history* is considered to show that the creeds of the past are the natural growth of the human mind in particular stages of its career, destined to disappear and to give place to other convictions in a more advanced stage. In the progress of discussion, this last class of considerations seems to be superseding those which address themselves directly to the question of truth. Religions tend to be discussed, at least by those who *reject them*, less as intrinsically true or false, than as products thrown up by certain states of civilization, and which, like the animal and vegetable productions of a geological period, perish in the periods which succeed it, from the cessation of the conditions necessary to their continued existence.”

Now, as we must try some method, let us take the topics which are here suggested :—

Let us think, first of all, of the conclusions to which Physical Science is supposed to have led mankind, and of some of the religious traditions of which it is the triumphant destroyer.

There is an old religious tradition that in the beginning GOD created the heaven and the earth ; that the earth is weak and the inhabitants thereof, and that this same GOD—whom we call Almighty GOD—bears up the pillars of it, and upholdeth all things by the Word of His power, ordering them according to the counsel of His will. The heavens, according to the old religious tradition, declare His glory, and the firmament showeth His handiwork. He maketh also the grass to grow upon the mountains and green herbs for the use of man. Now, in the name of Science, but really by the representatives of Physics, spoiled by bad Metaphysics, this tradition is held to be exploded, or to be relegated finally to the region of *Empty Emotion*, worshipping in ignorant wonder the Unknown and the Unknowable. We may go on at set seasons if we will, by the permission of such high priests of Physics and of Philosophy, as Professor Tyndall, or Mr. Herbert Spencer (the latter, by-the-by, a man of *immense*, I had almost said *prophetic*, influence among a most important section of the educated opinion of this day), we may go on worshipping, or being religious, under the influence of our own

theological bias, if we will only in our reasonable moods have the candour to confess the origin and the nature of these emotions, and the *fictitious* and unreal and purely imaginative world into which they introduce the mind of the man over whom their sway is exercised. These religious emotions, we must always in our sober moments recollect, are unaccredited, subjective susceptibilities. We have no right to assume that they accord with the reality of things. No consistent Agnostic would be so absurd as to suppose that they did so accord.

As the result of many convergent, intellectual and philosophical tendencies, tendencies generated in this country by the empiricism of Locke, and the philosophical scepticism of Hume, and fostered elsewhere by the influence of French sensationalism, by the subsequent teaching of Comte in France, and of later philosophers such (*e.g.*) as Büchner and Vogt, in Germany,—it has come to this, that the student of physical science, absorbed in the observation of physical phenomena, and strongly tempted to deny the reality of anything which cannot be submitted to his technical tests, now finds the metaphysics of materialism more and more systematically elaborated for his use, and close at hand to supply him with an apparently philosophical justification for yielding to a temptation to which in one form or

another, all specialists are peculiarly exposed.* Hence the difficulty of getting anything admitted into the circle of serious discussion which does not readily lend itself to the methods of physics,—hence the contempt with which theology is sometimes treated, and its phraseology parodied by too many physicists of the day. As an example of what I mean, and as a symptom of this disposition, take the celebrated phrase, “Men of science have come to believe in justification, not by faith, but by verification.” There is a *narrow provincialism of thought* latent in this joke, as well as a tone of triumphant contempt, against which, in all good faith, and with no attempt at scolding, our physicists should be respectfully warned to be upon their guard. Its only importance indeed—for of course the joke *proves* nothing either against justification by faith or in favour of justification by verification—is that it is *symptomatic*—symptomatic of a certain temper of scientific exclusiveness and of the prevalent pharisaism of some of our physicists. It is as such that I allude to it; it shows us into what we are developed.

* Cf. N. Porter, on Human Intellect, p. 19. “The man confirmed in his associations by a familiar mastery over some physical science, is the man of all others, to whom, when he considers the phenomena of the soul, the facts seem most novel, and the conceptions most unfamiliar.”

(a) It would take too long, indeed, to trace what appears to me the true history of this (so-called) scientific development. Many convergent lines of thought, as I have said, in the past, as well as of scientific habits of investigation in the present age, have combined to produce the present antagonistic and almost contemptuous tone of many of the leaders and propagators of popular materialism.

Without going back to the nominalism of Hobbes, I think we may fairly say that the philosophy of John Locke has much to answer for in this respect.

A sincere Christian, and a most reverent and earnest Theist as Locke undoubtedly was, there can be little doubt that he is, through his empiricism and his sensationalism, the unintentional foster-parent of modern materialism in this country. I say this with regret, for if there is a philosopher for whose great character, and sober and conscientious love of truth I have a real reverence, Locke is certainly such an one. There are few men to whom I am intellectually deeper in debt. But grand as he is, and removed by a whole heaven from many of those who have gone far beyond him in the direction of sensationalism, I think I detect, in the language of many modern Materialists and Agnostics, the "tang" of Locke's "cask."

All before him, in his opinion, had begun at the wrong end, letting loose our thoughts into the vast ocean of being. "These men," he said, "extend their inquiries beyond their capacity, whereas, were the horizon found which sets the bounds between the enlightened and the dark part of things, between what is and what is not comprehensible by us, other men would perhaps with less scruple acquiesce in our avowed ignorance of the one, and employ their thoughts and discourses with some advantage and satisfaction in the other." All previous philosophers had been occupied with Being—from Socrates to Spinoza. There was to be an end of these adventurous and fruitless voyages. The Sensualist philosophy of France, well known to many of us, even of those who have not read the actual treatises, through the brilliant lectures of Cousin, developed Locke's philosophy far beyond the limits which Locke had assigned it, until it reached its climax in Cabanis, who arrived at the conclusion that the soul is only a faculty, not a being, and that thought is only a secretion of the brain. Contemporaneously with the French influence there arose the genius of *Hume*, a man whom modern physicists peculiarly delight to honour. (By-the-bye, they who only know Hume through their Paley's Evidences have no conception of the greatness of his genius.) Hume,

again, taking his ground upon Locke's empiricism, transformed it, through investigations into the origin of the conception of cause, into a philosophy of utter Scepticism. Then came the positive Philosophy of Comte, and the materialistic speculations and inquiries of the later Germans, to whom we owe the doctrine that man "is what he eats," and to whom we are indebted for the Bible, as it has been called, of materialistic philosophy, "*Kraft und Stoff*." These streams of thought have found for the physical student a sort of ready-made metaphysics of materialism, and then the absorbing character of the study of physics, the hold which it seems to give men upon the tangible, the vast victories over space and time, which have been gained within the last fifty years by its means, its apparently absolute and undisturbed possession of the field of *facts*, all these together have combined to make the physicist look upon every fact of mind or of matter, as only a fact when it can be expressed in the terms, or translated into the language, of his pursuit. In short, with him the translation *is the original*; what he cannot formulate cannot be known.

In Physics, says Professor Tyndall, in an article in a popular Review, "we observe what "our senses, armed with the aids furnished by "science, enable us to observe, nothing more."

(b) Apply this to the whole Astronomic Realm. Atheism is the outcome. "I have observed," says one, "I have scanned the whole heaven with "the telescope (one of the aids furnished by "science to the senses), and I can find *no God*."

"I have opened the brain with my scalpel," says another, "and I came upon no *soul*" (the scalpel being another of the aids furnished by science to the senses).

We assert that we can find traces of the workings of *intelligence* in the world of *Nature* (external nature). On the contrary. Observation (we are told) by the senses, aided with the instruments of science, shows us no working of *mind*, or what you call mind, except as the result of *brain*. "I ask to be shown," says an objector, "somewhere within the universe, embedded in "nervine, and fed with warm arterial blood under "proper pressure, a convolution of ganglionic "globules and nerve tubes proportioned in size to "the faculties of such a mind."

Do you not think, we may say, that there is evidence in nature, including the structure of our human frame, of *design of a purpose*? Were not, for instance, the lungs adapted for respiration?

No, says Professor Clifford, in a popular essay, or Sunday Lecture, "you must distinguish, you "must not argue as you would about the design of "a corkscrew. A corkscrew was made by a man

“with a purpose in his mind. *No one made our lungs.* The respiratory apparatus was adapted to its purpose by natural selection (*i.e.* by the gradual preservation of better and better adaptations, and the killing off of the worse and imperfect adaptations).” This is “an unconscious adaptation.” This is said in a lecture delivered to hundreds, printed and lying on the drawing-room tables of hundreds. Not only so, Mr. Bradlaugh, in the twentieth thousand of a pamphlet just published, points out that in his opinion the argument from Design does not prove the creation of something out of nothing, because all you have is the *adaptation* of what are already pre-existing substances. He quotes, too, in this same paper (twentieth thousand) from a man who did much to popularize materialism, G. H. Lewes, “There is not a single known organism which is not developed out of simpler forms. Before it can attain the complex structure which distinguishes it, there must be an evolution of forms which distinguish the structures of organisms lower down in the series. On the hypothesis of a plan which pre-arranged the Organic World, nothing could be more unworthy of a supreme intelligence than this inability to construct an organ at once, without making several tentative efforts. Would there be a chorus of applause from the Institute of Architects if such *profound*

“wisdom as this were displayed by some ‘Great Architect’ of houses?”

One of the great characteristics, you see, of our modern unbelief is that it finds for itself a popular voice with such amazing rapidity. Therein lies its danger to men for our time. It is hardly out of the lips of the student before it is in the ears of the multitude. The philosophical speculation, especially if it have in it a dash of an ironical innuendo, is so soon thrown in as a “new light” among the passions and prejudices of the crowd. We miss no small part of the significance of the situation if we ignore this most striking acceleration of the pace at which the sceptical, the atheistic, the antichristian ideas are moving from class to class in this one generation.

(c) But I have quoted this arraignment by Lewes and Bradlaugh of the processes of Infinite Wisdom, not only because it seems to me (circulated as it is by tens of thousands) to be one of the most dangerous and deadly of the weapons of Atheism, but because it leads me briefly to notice that *Pessimism* which would destroy all one’s joy in the works of God, and in the old tradition that the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord. It is very important in this respect to notice how thoroughly the method of attack is changed from that of the *Deistic* controversy of the last century. Then it was the glorification of Nature, in order to depre-

ciate the arguments for the need of a Revelation, with which Christianity was assailed. Now, we find ourselves depreciating Nature, and finding in her alleged imperfections and apparent cruelties, an argument against the benevolence *or* against the omnipotence of God. One is reminded of the assertion of a once distinguished lawyer, circulated in a widely read magazine article after his death, that there was so much pain and misery in Nature that if he knew she were about to perish, and if, by lifting his finger, he could save her from annihilation—he would not lift it. One is reminded of the doctrine of Schopenhauer that the world is the *worst* of all possible worlds, and *annihilation* (almost equivalent to the Nirvana of some phases of Buddhism) is the highest end of man. One is reminded, too, of a more popular philosopher, *Hartmann*, who determines, not with a yawn of ennui, but philosophically, that existence is in itself an evil, in proportion as its range is larger and you know it more. The whole constitution of the world (so stupidly does it work) would be an unpardonable crime, did it issue from a power that knew what it was about, which, of course, upon the Materialist theory, it does not. But one is reminded, still more forcibly, of that tremendous indictment which Mr. Mill (a still more popular philosopher) brings against Nature, in the first of those celebrated and widely circulated essays,

which contain the explosive shell with which my Cambridge friend threatened me some years ago, as certain to be thrown into the Christian camp. "In sober truth," says Mill, "nearly all the things which men are hanged or imprisoned for doing to one another, are Nature's every-day performances." And let us remember, this short but trenchant sentence is a fair specimen of the conclusions of the whole Paper. In short, I know not in the whole range of English literature a more tremendous catalogue of charges against Nature than that which this Essay contains. It will take a good deal of preaching to undo its effects on men, and yet it cannot be ignored with impunity.

It is the more important too, to notice this assertion, as it comes from a man who does not altogether give up the hope of immortality—although he does not think it can be held as anything more than a bare hope—and who seems to feel that there may be some force in the argument from *design*, in favour of the possible existence of a *mind* above us, and who, therefore, does not go the length of many of his more recent disciples in the direction of Atheism. But yet, even with Mill we cannot get anything more on this head than an acknowledgment that there is some considerable evidence that there is a *Designer*. He is quite clear there cannot be an *Omnipotent*

Designer ; also, any evidence, in Mill's opinion, for Infinite *Beneficence* is utterly wanting. Physical science and the methods of induction preclude the possibility of the truth of this *Religious Tradition*.

But to pass from the Pessimism of Mill and others, there is another and a more trenchant and less modest disputant, to whom I have already slightly referred, and whose "Sunday Lectures," and magazine articles have been published since his premature death. Clifford died young. He was second Wrangler and second Smith's Prize-man in 1867. He was originally, I believe, a High Churchman ; but he shook off his "cradle faith," as he called it, early, and few men have more ardently or bitterly attacked the faith in the very existence of a GOD at all, or have been more uncompromising in their denunciation of even the most liberal form of Christianity. He was a man of pure life, of ardent affection, and of great courage, but it seemed to me that it went against the grain of his soul even to shake hands with a priest. His motto was, "Sacerdos, semper ubique et omnibus inimicus." When one tried to argue with Clifford, or to point out that the Church had been a bulwark in the early ages against the tyranny of kings, his answer was, "Oh, yes ; Pope and king fell out, and when Pope and Cæsar fall out, honest men do sometimes come "by their own." The whole business of religion

was one long sin against mankind. On this question of GOD or no GOD, hear him for a moment—remember, not the mere professor of mathematics—not the dilettante sceptic, but the man who held that truth ought to be shouted from the housetops, not whispered over rose-water when the ladies had left the table, and who did his best to shout it.

“For, after all,” says Clifford, “such a helper of men outside Humanity the Truth will not allow us to see. The dim and shadowy outlines of the superhuman Deity fade slowly away from before us, and, as the mist of his presence floats aside, we perceive with greater and greater clearness the shape of a yet grander and nobler figure, of him who made all gods and shall unmake them. From the dim dawn of history, and from the inmost depths of every soul, the face of our Father *man* looks out upon us with the fire of eternal youth in his eyes, and says: ‘Before Jehovah was, I am.’”

This is the last message of *Science*. Nay, rather, let me say, not of science, but of the system of philosophy which many Physicists have adopted. I cannot help exclaiming, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

II.

Are we surprised after this, after a consideration so rapid and imperfect, even, as this must necessarily be, of the influence which is being exerted by men of talent and character, and of liberal, if not learned education, that all “ religions “ tend to be discussed,” to use Mr. Mill’s expressive phrase, “ less as intrinsically true or false, than as “ products thrown up by certain states of civiliza- “ tion, and which like the animal and vegetable “ productions of a certain geological period, perish “ in those which succeed it, from the cessation of “ the conditions necessary to their continued “ existence.”

Paley, in the preparatory Considerations prefixed to his Evidences, makes the following remark:—

“ I desire that, in judging of Christianity, it “ may be remembered that the question lies “ between this religion and none; for, if the “ Christian religion be not credible, no one with “ whom we have to do will support the preten- “ sions of any other.”

Times are changed since this dilemma was presented as exhaustive of the subject. Fresh ground has been broken up, and Christianity is catalogued among the many other phases or results

of the so-called "Theological Bias" in mankind, as one of the many products of all the antecedent physical, biological, and sociological conditions which it is interesting and useful, and, indeed, for a positive philosopher necessary to study; but about the absolute truth or falsehood of which it has become, in the higher circles of intellectual development, an anachronism to trouble the mind. There is no more favourite subject of criticism now than that of the different religions which have appeared among men, or which have been fanned for a time into a living flame by the earnestness of prophets or martyrs, who were simple enough or ignorant enough to take their legends or their dreams for facts, or by priests, who made a market of the dread or the credulity of uninstructed masses of mankind. The origin of each religion, the meaning of its symbols, the character and tendency of its doctrines, the range, the durability, the intensity of its influence over various races and in various ages; the way in which its fables have been manufactured into facts, its men transformed into divinities; all these are topics of interest in educated society as well as in *Popular Lectures*. All religions now are to be dealt with, not as divine verities, but as human products. Religions are hung up at a convenient distance now, like pictures, to be looked at, to be compared, to be patronized by

philosophical or atheistic connoisseurs. The music of the human heart is mute, or it is the music of a dream. Its heaven is but the projection of its own untutored selfishness or enthusiasm, and its hell but the ghosts of its own superstitious dread of the unseen malignities; its sins are but its misfortunes; its reverence for Christ, or for Buddha, or for Brahma, or for Mahomet, but *Hero Worship*, in a form more or less unworthy. We clergymen have followed, with the rest, cunningly devised fables, to which mankind is prone. Our gods, even when not the creation of our own hands, are always that of our own devising, or of our own superstitious traditions. There is no *reality* anywhere, no truth anywhere, save the truth of Science. Science has swept the field clear from all the weeds and unrealities, and thrown the light of its infallible methods upon the scarecrows of Theology.

But we may say, stay a minute. We decline to permit our reverence for Christ to be evaporated into a hero-worship, or our faith to be classed among the *legends* or the empty enthusiasms of mankind in the weaker and more credulous moments of its history. Ours is a *historical religion*. It is the history of a kingdom of God set up among men. It is not the history of the deification of ideal men, but of the Incarnation of God. We have historical documents,

authentic and genuine, which explain the origin and justify the continuance of the Faith in the truth as it is in Jesus. Sweep the dreams away if you will, but do not try to sweep off the facts.

III.

Historical Religion—Authentic, genuine Documents! This introduces us into another and very terrible phase of the war against the Faith. We are face to face now with the “*higher criticism*,”—criticism for example of the Tübingen school; with the works, too, of Strauss and Renan; criticisms, and so-called biographies, the assumptions of which, the alleged and much-vaunted results of which are translated, circulated, popularized in lectures, in Halls of Science, to an extent which would surprise many of us who have only a vague notion that Mr. Bradlaugh is dangerous and that Mrs. Besant is an Atheistic Malthusian!

Just let me recall for a moment some of the characteristics of the original Tübingen criticism, and of the spirit of the lives of Jesus, of Strauss and Renan. With Baur, a scientific research not only demonstrates the impossibility, but *starts* with the assumption of the impossibility, of the miraculous. Christianity cannot be allowed to

claim a miraculous beginning, because it is a *universally* valid law that everything must take place as a development, a *necessary* development from germs and causes *already extant*. He defines the elements of the Christian faith as natural developments of the Jewish religion, and as the resultant of all the co-existent environments of its birth and early career. The resurrection, for example, of Christ was of course not an objective fact, but the *doctrine* of the resurrection was the necessary result of the firm (but mistaken) faith of His disciples. Of His Godhead, too, at first they never dreamed. The doctrine is a subsequent development. Again, Christianity became in an early stage split up into two antagonistic schools—Petrine and Pauline. None of the books, therefore (such is the allegation) in which the doctrine of the Godhead of Christ is fully developed can be the composition of the first century, and no books which are not decisively Petrine or decisively Pauline can be genuine. With this two-edged knife ready to hand, vigorous incisions are made, and book after book disappears from the Bible, and we are left with Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Revelation, and with expurgated and very doubtfully admitted fragments of the Synoptics. St. John, of course, is cut out, and ascribed to some unknown author, after 160 A.D., reminding us of Mill's statement, "Any

“Alexandrine philosopher will supply us with any amount of such STUFF AS THIS.”

Strauss, equally with *Baur*, discards the miraculous, and therefore, of course, utterly rejects any accounts of alleged miracles performed by Jesus Christ, or any doctrine of the miraculous super-human nature of His person. The hero of a biography must be entirely and clearly *human*. A personage half human, half divine, may figure plausibly enough in poetry or fable, but is never at the present day chosen as the subject of historical narrative. Historical credibility tolerates no miraculous interruption of the order of events. The allowance of such miracles subverts the very nature of science.

Renan's is of course a much more popular and charming book than *Strauss's*, and is in some respects a delicious intellectual picture, full of sweetness and light. Renan, however, like *Strauss*, will have no parley with the miraculous; except in the form of a legend, or a kind of pious fraud. “In the name of universal experience, we banish miracles from history.” (Not perhaps, may I venture to add, from *religion* or from poetry.) I need not dwell upon the facile waving of the wand of this weaver of religious romances. We remember it, most of us, all too well. In Renan's book, as has been well said by Maurice, we have “The life of a Jesus who was not the

“ Christ ; who is not the king of men ; who came
“ from no father in heaven ; who baptized with no
“ spirit ; who did not rise from the dead ; who
“ claimed titles which were not his ; who preached
“ mere deceptions ; who yet is recognized as
“ a hero by his biographer, and by thousands
“ who have read the biography ; who has been
“ accepted as a substitute for the person whom in
“ our infancy we were taught to revere.”

The Jesus of the Frenchman has, in too many instances, displaced the Christ of the Gospels, and seems to many men more like a real person, with a real history.

“ The pure moral teaching of the Galilean
“ Idyls, the Galilean enthusiasm, the dark and
“ inexplicable fanaticism of the closing scenes ;
“ the feminine hallucination of the resurrection.”
These have fascinated where the Evangelists have been scorned. One word more on this head. You will be almost sure to see Renan's *Life of Jesus* advertised in Bradlaugh's weekly paper ! Care is taken that it shall be known and read by English working men, and that interest shall be taken in it in popular assemblies.

Now then, let us go from the criticisms of the Tübingen scholars, the ingenious assumptions of the German philosopher, the elegant and polished epigrams and attractive word-paintings of the French Orientalist, to the Hall of Science, and

let us listen to the popular lecturer, Mrs. Annie Besant, joint editor, with Charles Bradlaugh, of a popular Atheistic periodical.

Mrs. Besant then rose, and when the loud applause had subsided, said, "The difficulty is
" not to prove that Christ was believed to be an
" historical personage after the fourth century, but
" to bridge over the years between A.D. 1—300.
" You cannot carry the history of Christ, and the
" history of the Gospel over that terrible chasm of
" three centuries. I will give you a coherent
" account of the heretical view, and I shall urge
" that it is more in accordance with the facts of
" history, human experience, scientific thought,
" and common sense, than to accept the view
" that the Jesus of the Gospels is an historical
" character. We are agreed that the Jesus of the
" Gospels is a supernatural character. His birth
" of a Virgin, the marvels surrounding His infancy,
" His wonderful baptism, His temptation by the
" devil, His miracles of healing, of destruction,
" and self-defence, His foreknowledge of His own
" death, the darkness surrounding His Cross, His
" Resurrection and Ascension. If you take all
" these it is impossible to deny that His life is
" supernatural and miraculous from beginning to
" end. I do not say you cannot remove all these
" miraculous surroundings, and still leave the
" simple Jew, who went about as a teacher of the

“ people ; but you have then no longer the Jesus
“ of the Gospels. But I have to deal with the
“ Jesus of the Gospels, and I shall show how
“ various myths floating about, became crystal-
“ lized round the figure of Jesus of Nazareth.
“ I cannot admit the miraculous. That Jesus of
“ the Gospels is miraculous is a stumbling-block
“ at the very outset. There are so many incarnate
“ gods in history, and they all present the same
“ birthmarks. They are always born at such a
“ remote period, or at some such an out of the
“ way place, that it is impossible to submit their
“ claims to scientific investigation. Their births
“ are always surrounded by prodigies ; they always
“ work miracles when they grow up ; there is
“ always something mysterious in their deaths ;
“ they always ascend triumphant at last. I allege
“ that Jesus is one of these mythic characters.
“ The essence of the spirit in which Science
“ meets the record of Miracles, is the spirit of
“ Hume, that it is much more likely that men
“ should be deceived than that our whole experi-
“ ence of nature should have been contradicted.
“ You all act upon this belief in ordinary life.
“ Even those who accept the Gospel miracles
“ pooh-pooh the modern ones.” Mrs. Besant
then goes on to expose the invalidity of the
testimony from the Fathers, after the manner of
the author of “ Supernatural Religion.”

I might quote more, but I really have not space, it is enough to show us that the speculations of the great sceptic, and the annihilation effected by the "higher criticisms" are not confined to the study or the treatise.

The network of this Mission of Atheism, accompanied by systematic attacks upon the historical character of the New Testament, is spread throughout England.

There is an "open air" propaganda in the summer and autumn. You take up Mr. Bradlaugh's paper; you will see notices such as these:—

"MIDLAND RAILWAY ARCHES.—Last Sunday
" Mr. Haslam delivered an excellent lecture on
" the 'Contradictions of the Bible.'"

"CLERKENWELL GREEN.—Mr. Forder lectured
" on the 'Historical Character of Christ,' to the
" largest audience of the season. There was
" some opposition, but Mr. Forder pleased the
" audience by his reply."

"CLAREMONT HALL, PENTONVILLE. — Mr.
" Robert Forder lectured on 'Early Christianity,'
" and showed the weakness of the evidence on
" which it rested and the entire absence of reliable
" testimony to its truth in the works of the Early
" Fathers."

"STOCKTON BRANCH.—Dr. Aveling: 'The
" Parentage of Man, according to Moses and

“ ‘ according to Darwin.’ Evening : ‘ Why I
 “ ‘ dare not be a Christian.’ ”*

“ STALYBRIDGE.—‘ Is another life possible or
 “ ‘ desirable ? ’ ”

“ FAILSWORTH.—New Secular Sunday Schools
 “ opened.”

I suppose there are not less than twenty places of popular atheistical resort in London alone, open every Sunday, and there are branches in a very large number of towns in England. Foremost is the Hall of Science, in Old Street, just on the borders of Shoreditch ; and I am told that the personal influence of Mr. Bradlaugh and the enthusiasm which he excites are most remarkable. I have never been to one of these Sunday lectures, but I have had authentic reports of their proceedings. He is “ *our Charlie*,” “ the thorough ; ” “ the thorough Razor—good and “ a keen cutter, highly-polished, firm yet easy, “ to *the point*, always ready, dangerous if handled “ unfairly, sent out with a good case.”

It is not merely the lectures on Sundays, but the social attractions of this and similar clubs which are so important in their antitheistic and anti-Christian tendency over *both sexes*. At this club there are quadrille assemblies on Mondays

* Another topic of this popular Lecturer, is now, I understand, “ *The Wickedness of God.*”

and Saturdays, elementary and advanced dancing classes, billiard-rooms, coffee-rooms, etc. Even *children* are drawn into the net, as one might well suppose from the Sunday School system having been seized upon by Secularists. A witness came into court not long since. He was told to kiss the Testament, which he held in his hand. "Please, sir, I object to kiss the New Testament." "What for?" "Please, sir, I am a Secularist." "How old are you?" "Twelve years, sir." "You may stand down."

What an awful sermon this one revelation preaches to us of what is going on around us!

Even if we had grounds for supposing that such an exhibition as this were an isolated case, we should be struck with astonishment and with profound regret. But when we know what is going on in all the great centres of industry and influence in England, we cannot but feel that the youthful Atheist is one of a class which is receiving recruits every day to its ranks, and we are filled with profound dismay, and ask where the effect of this mission of Atheism and of Antichrist is to end. Setting aside for the moment the thought of a future life altogether, how disastrous, one is led to exclaim, to all that is most dear to us, both in personal purity and social and national morality, must this strangling of our cradle faiths, and this loosening of the hold of reverence and love for God and Christ ultimately prove!

IV.

The PHYSICIST may rejoice in the triumph of science—or rather in the usurpation of universal dominion which the philosophy of the “advanced” is seeking to render complete; although to a careful observer it seems evident that, in order to attain this triumph, physical science has had to depart from the true methods of observation and experiment, and to soar in regions of metaphysical conceptions, and, at the best, of splendid guesses as to the origin of things and the source and nature of the mystery of life, before which true science is dumb. The CRITICS may feel proud that their lonely and laborious inquiries, or their too often preconceived and arbitrary canons of interpretation, rejection, and of acceptance of books formerly believed to be genuine, have found for themselves a potent voice among the masses of the people, but what has the MORALIST to say to all this?

The *Basis* gone, the Christian $\eta\theta\omicron\varsigma$ swept away by the relentless hand of an unscrupulous “*Free-thought*.” Where are we to look now for our $\acute{\alpha}\rho\chi\eta$ in ETHICS? Where is our standard and sanction of RIGHT and WRONG?

Very grave fears are necessarily excited in the mind of any man who has realised what an immense service Christianity and, even, Theism have done to mankind, when we are bidden, as we are, to cease looking heavenward (except for astronomical purposes), and when the bands of righteousness and of veracity and of benevolence, seem loosed from the souls of men! Even stopping short, where, by the bye, we are now peremptorily ordered to stop short, at the grave, we cannot but feel that a most awful loss has been inflicted upon the human race; upon that very humanity which, so far as I can understand the new science or nescience, we are bidden to worship henceforth to the utmost of our power! You have taken away the Divine, you have eliminated the Supernatural, you have robbed us of the Authoritative Moral Law of Christ. Have some patience with us while, in what seems to you, our stupid or superstitious dread, we ask you to realize the imminent danger of the new situation, and the moral horrors into which your irrevocable decrees may introduce the world!

The answers which we get to such expostulations as these are very numerous. One, for instance, of the most distinguished of modern English philosophers, Mr. Herbert Spencer, has done us the justice to admit that there *is* some danger for morals in the new time coming unless

fresh reserves of moral sanctions are brought up in time from the camp of Evolution and of Science. He has hurried forward his work on Ethics, on the very ground that, the supernatural supports and sanctions of morals being swept away, there is a danger of men supposing that there *are* no moral standards or sanctions. "I am the more anxious," he tells us in his preface, "to indicate in outline, if I cannot complete this final work, because the establishment of rules of right conduct on a scientific basis is a pressing need. Now that moral injunctions are losing the authority given them by their supposed sacred origin, the SECULARISATION OF MORALS IS BECOME IMPERATIVE. I expect to present moral rule in that attractive aspect which it has when it ceases to be disturbed by superstition and asceticism."

I have read from time to time this new Bible of the Evolutionist, and I am even yet at a loss to find anything in it which supplies an adequate substitute for God, and for Christ's Authoritative Teaching and Example. It is a most interesting account of the genesis of the conscience and of moral feeling, from pleasure and pain, and of the evolution of conduct correlated to the evolution of structures and functions, and a most persistent assumption of the adequacy of the history (and the hypotheses) of evolution and the survival of

the fittest, to account for, and to satisfy the moral longings of men. But upon the fundamental questions of right and wrong, I cannot extract an answer that will serve my turn as a man asking for Light and Leading in the dark times coming for Morals.

In this matter (that of our anxiety as to our morality), Mr. Clifford is more trenchant, and tells us his mind on this head, in a contribution to a widely circulated magazine, lying, as the Archbishop of Canterbury* says, on the tables of all persons laying claim to culture or education, for the use of their sons and daughters. Clifford was not the man to whisper such things over rose water. He announces plainly that, in losing belief in God, we are parting with what is, at the best, a refined and elevated pleasure to those who can indulge in it. But he fails to see how the foregoing of such a pleasure, when we have no right to indulge in it, can produce, as a consequence, a decline of morality. Lord Bacon taught us, with all the weight of his authority and eloquence, that the end of knowledge was the glory of God, and the relief of man's estate. Clifford, and all too many with him, seem to be of opinion that man's estate can never be effectually

* Archbishop Tait, who was living when this Paper was read.

relieved until you get rid altogether of the dream of God, of the miseries and wrongs of which it is the foster-parent in men. *Tantum Religio potuit suadere malorum.* We shall gain more than we lose by parting with it altogether. Like a deadly cancer, it had better come out. *Man* will be let free from the danger of dangers—the dread of all dreads, the scourge—the scorpion—of sacerdotal Christianity. That is the system which sapped the foundation of patriotism in the old world; which well-nigh eradicated the habit of intellectual honesty and truth-speaking, which lowered men's reverence for the marriage bond, placing its sanction outside nature. Bring back this, and the wreck of civilized Europe will be darker than the darkest of the past ages. “Keep “the human Conscience clear of this.” *Conscience!* What, sir, may we ask, is the voice of Conscience? Have you not emptied it for me of all its charm and authority, when you have demonstrated that there is no Divine Speaker, of whose word it is the Echo? No! is the reply. “Your conscience “is safe. It is the voice of our father man within “us!” That seems to me, I reply, hardly a scientific expression. It sounds almost as much a figure of speech as that about “Our Father in Heaven,” which we learnt at our mother's knee; but that, of course, is exploded with the rest of our cradle faith. “Well; take this then. *It is the accumu-*

“*lated instinct of the race poured into each one of us,*
“*and overflowing as if the ocean were poured into a*
“*cup.*” Thank you. I asked you for a scientific formula, but you cannot leave it alone. You are compelled to vulgarize and popularize it by figures of speech, about *oceans* and *cups*! Just so. The new Atheism must be made popular somehow, and there is nothing *tells* so well as an apt, and yet homely illustration.

And, indeed, it is all too popular. Nay, anything like dread of what may happen, when Atheism reigns supreme, seems to be treated as a kind of high treason to the human race. The era of the complete expulsion of the faith and its ministers from the earth, is looked upon as a *Utopia*, to be longed and laboured for, and to be foreshadowed with gloating glee. Let us turn from the rhetoric of the philosopher to that of the more popular missionary of the good (and godless) times which are coming. Here is an article from Mr. Bradlaugh’s paper, written by DR. AVELING. It is a *Dream of “The Land of No “White-chokers.”* A sort of Atheistic Apocalypse. “In the country of No White-chokers everybody
“looks happy and hopeful, because the evil men,
“who have so long rendered the dwellers in our
“land unhappy and hopeless, are unknown there.
“To begin with, the mere physical relief to the
“eye is so great. The moral ugliness associated

“ with it is reflected on to the unfortunate garb,
“ just as the uniform of a convict, were it ever so
“ artistic, would always be regarded by decent
“ people with aversion. It is the badge of intel-
“ lectual slavery, and very repulsive to thinking
“ people to-day. It may possibly be a fancy on
“ my part, but I seem to notice of late an instinc-
“ tive shrinking away from the unhappy wearers of
“ the slave garments, on the part of finer-featured
“ people in public haunts. Now in this other
“ country, these beings are not to be found. All
“ schools are free from this terrible incubus. The
“ prospectus of the establishment for boys and
“ girls (there are no young ladies’ seminaries, no
“ academies for young gentlemen), do not contain
“ the name of a single ‘ Reverend.’ When lectures
“ are given on Science or Art, the chair is never
“ taken by a limp black bag, with a whisp of
“ white tape round his neck. The wealth of the
“ country is infinitely enlarged compared with that
“ of other lands. Tithes, churchrates, Bishops’
“ wages, all saved, as well as the money squan-
“ dered by sending out white-chokers to worry
“ savages. This money is utilized for the purpose
“ of increasing the bodily and mental comfort of
“ men, and brightening the existence of multi-
“ tudes. The founts of knowledge at the Univer-
“ sities are not poisoned at the source by flowing
“ through so pestilent a mass of decaying and

“ decayed creeds. The words Heaven and Hell
“ have no synonym in the country of No White-
“ chokers. The blasphemy of the Christian
“ Heaven, and the horror of the Christian Hell
“ are unknown. There is no one to teach these
“ criminal doctrines. All are too happy, too
“ busy to waste time over tales that have not
“ even the truth or grace of fairy stories. Hence
“ children are much happier. The men with the
“ garb of slaves do not dim the home light with
“ their accursed presence. As they grow up
“ they are not blasted with the deadly influence
“ of religion. The children are born, and enter
“ into life with no intruding priest mumbling
“ meaningless blasphemies over their innocent
“ existence. When the love time glows upon
“ them, they are wedded in the sight of man
“ without a word of God or Heaven. When the
“ end comes, the dead are burnt, after the antique
“ Roman manner, and no religious rite mars
“ the sacred loveliness of the thought. ‘He is
“ ‘ passed, finished work a little earlier than we
“ ‘ have. He rests from his labours, and his
“ ‘ works and his memory are with us to-day,
“ ‘ and all days.’ ”

The social reformers—the social moralists, have, we see, according to this apocalypse, nothing to fear from the threatened destruction of all the existing sanctions and standards of goodness.

These are the very things which stand in the way of the new and happier times.

Now any one who asks himself what must be the tendency of such popular writings as these must be fearfully indifferent to human happiness and to human progress, if his own answer to his own question do not fill him with many apprehensions, and with many yearnings for the spirit of Power and of Love, and a sound mind in dealing with this state of things. The teaching comes to this, that on the Moral and Social side of the account, we shall gain more than we lose by the advent of Atheism and the reign of the Secularist.

We might perhaps be disposed to ask the missionaries of this new Negation, whether, even under this new *régime*, they would not be under an incalculable debt to Jesus Christ, and to His inestimable moral teaching. We might remind them that Mr. Mill has told us that mankind were right in pitching upon this man as the ideal object of Reverence, and upon His teaching as that which had conferred an immense benefit upon mankind. We might remember that even Mr. Mill, rejecting the miracles of Jesus Christ, not upon the *à priori* grounds of Hume, but on account of the meagre evidence, as Mill considered it, in their favour, has yet left it on record, as a legacy to this generation, that there is no better translation of

the Rules of Virtue, from the abstract into the concrete, than to endeavour so to live as that Christ would approve our life. But the new Criticism sets itself to take off the robe of glory which the devotion of ages has thrown round the teaching of Jesus, as recorded in the Gospels. The more cultured and courteous indeed, when Jesus is reported to have said something in the Gospels which militates against their theory of the sweet reasonableness of Christ, get rid of the reported saying, by simply telling us (*ex cathedra*)—"He could not have said it." But this does not satisfy the crowd.

In popular penny pamphlets, now, you will find quite another line is taken. The genuineness of the books, or at least the authenticity of the report, is for the moment, taken for granted, and then the words and sayings are criticised, and in some instances condemned. One remembers some such a treatment as this, years ago, in Francis Newman's "Phases of Faith," where you will find, prefaced, indeed, by a considerate warning to the sensitive reader, some such an indictment drawn up against our Lord. It is found, too, in some disciples of the Comtist philosophy. But, as significant of the signs of the times, take a penny pamphlet on the "Sermon on the Mount," by the same Apocalyptic writer, whom I have already quoted at some length—

He complains (in his penny* pamphlet or tract) of that sermon—that there is no scientific method in it. “Perhaps,” he says, “it was badly reported, but if these were really the words of God, there ought to have been no confusion in reporting.” But, however, taking the fragment as we have it, Dr. Aveling complains that there is no perception of the beautiful in it. Our Lord seems to have been unhappily wanting in a sense of beauty. Again, the sermon, and the teaching and life of Jesus show that He could sympathize with the unhappy, but had no feeling for the joyousness of life. He never felt the joy of being alive. Again, “He was ONE-SIDED.”

Again: the sermon is rich in *platitudes*. A great deal of the advice had been given before.

At the same time, it is *fanatical*; things are put too extremely, *e.g.* over-meekness—quite *condemnable*. So, too, poverty of spirit. If Dr. Aveling is told that he is misled by a bad or inadequate translation, he says: “GOD ought to have looked after the translation.”

Then, in this popular pamphlet, the precept respecting turning the cheek to the striker is condemned as *cowardly*.

Our Lord’s warning of hell-fire is condemned

* I refer to the price of the pamphlet that we may realise its popular character and extended circulation.

as *fanatical*. His threats are hideous. "As men
"become more human they will become less Christian!"

Then He was *too unworldly* for our pamphleteer. His thoughts concentrated on the unreal, imaginary, *other* world. Dr. Aveling knows of no deeper condemnation.

CONCLUSION.

Let these instances suffice. They are most significant of the kind of influence that is being exerted, and of the indomitable and untiring energy with which the Faith is being assailed in popular, as well as in so-called philosophical circles. They bear out the statement with which I began, that unbelief, philosophical and popular, invades every province of human thought, and that it boasts of being able to find a basis of morals; an object of worship, *mankind*; a compensation for the loss of God, and an *advance* upon the teaching of Christ.

This is the way in which Science is said to contradict the most sacred traditions of the human race; this is the way in which all religions (except the religion which has no God) tend to be discussed; and while I am penning the last pages of this hastily written Essay, a lady enters my study, the wife of an East End clergyman, and

tells me their great enemy, in a parish of 20,000, is not Dissent, but Infidelity. "But you have been," she says, "in the West of London, too; how is it there?" I answer, "NO BETTER—the atmosphere is charged with it. Any day we may have a storm."

"Madam, knowing what we know, hearing what we hear, do you wonder that I get tired of discussions upon points on which disciples of Jesus *differ*, and that I cannot fan the flame of my enthusiasm in favour of, or in opposition to, vestments, or attitudes, or positions. When all the foundations of the earth are out of course, I blame no man who thinks he is in the right in spending his energies, his reverence on these things. To *him* they may be of infinite value. For myself, I am comparatively indifferent to Ritual!"

PAPER II.

REASSURING HINTS, WITH FURTHER
ELUCIDATIONS.

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INTRODUCTION.

I. My former paper contained many quotations, some of them very unpleasant and shocking to the Christian ear.

I was not surprised at the expressions (I had almost said the outbursts) of disapproval and sorrow with which those quotations were greeted. But they have answered the purpose which I had in view when I made them. They have helped some of my brother clergymen, and many of the laity, to realise, as they had never done before, not only the nature but the prevalence of modern unbelief. They have helped some of us to see, as it were, with our own eyes, how persistently and thoroughly the missionaries of unbelief in its most extreme and actively hostile form are at work among the people of this country. We are thoroughly disabused now of the mistaken notion that it is only scientific or learned or educated persons who take an interest in the results of

metaphysical theories, or of Historical and Biblical Criticism, or who are attracted by the offer of a new Basis for Morals, "now that "all moral injunctions are losing the authority "given them by their supposed sacred origin."*

Thus far, then, I have reason to be satisfied with the result of my first Paper, and, for many reasons, I could be well content to proceed no further in this business. But I am met by the reiterated request of your Secretary that I should go on with at least one more Paper on the subject, and I am asked by many correspondents whose opinion I highly value, to make that Paper suggestive, to some extent at least, of the "*Answers*," to be given to the missionaries of unbelief, and of the method and the spirit in which the clergy should endeavour to treat the whole tone of mind which those missionaries are endeavouring to produce among the masses of the people, especially in the more important centres of population and intelligence.

Urged, then, by these requests, I venture, although with extreme diffidence, once more to enter upon the subject of my former Paper. What I am about to say will be, I trust, of some help to at least a few of us, in dealing with the questions at issue between the Christian and the

* Cf. Herbert Spencer's *Data of Ethics*.

Atheist or Secularist. My remarks at any rate will have this use—they will help still further to elucidate the *thoroughness* of the nature of the antagonistic influences which are active in our midst, while, at the same time, they will demonstrate the necessity of our being at least equally thorough in our method of treating these fundamental principles of life and of morals, which are either openly attacked or secretly undermined, not only by many philosophical sceptics and metaphysical scientists, but by eloquent popular lecturers and pamphleteers of our day.

II. Before, however, I proceed to the specific discussions of these questions, there are a few preliminary suggestions which I think it will be well to offer as to the general spirit in which we should approach their further consideration. One or two such general suggestions seem especially advisable if answers are wanted which are likely to have any lasting effect upon others.

The most important preliminary suggestion seems to be this—"Let us be *personal* with ourselves—let each one of us be personal with "himself upon this matter." It is, I think, of the greatest importance that we should go over carefully and periodically, each man for himself, the grounds, which each one feels privately, for himself to afford the strongest support to his faith in the articles of the Christian Creed. His

understanding, dealing with ascertained facts, may be expected to afford some support at least to each Christian man's individual convictions and hopes. We ought to personally feel ourselves capable of making use of those supports, and of realising their strength in our own case. Each clergyman ought to go into a kind of *Intellectual Retreat* from time to time. The condition of our modern life, the tendency to deal at second-hand with the most awful questions of Theology and Morals, the whole tone of our Philosophical and Religious worlds, should force us into severe and unsparing self-examination as to the grounds upon which we can, most satisfactorily to ourselves, give a reason for the "Hope that is in us."

Polemically, indeed, it may be advantageous to observe carefully the effect which this or that line of argument may produce in others. But our first consideration is, not "what seems to be an effective argument or an affecting appeal to the world at large," but, "what have *we* found to be the most thoroughly effective and the most enduring arguments in our own case?"

I believe that in the long run we should gain immensely, even controversially, if we did not set about the consideration of these topics as controversialists, but as men betaking themselves to private meditation and personal self-introspection. There would be, I think, a *freshness*, even where

there was no eminent ability in our method of speaking upon such topics as those embraced in this paper, a freshness which would tell immensely in the long run upon others with whom we came in contact, if we thought out carefully our own individual intellectual position from time to time, afresh, and used our book-work as a help rather than a substitute for painful private thought. We hear and speak much now of the influence of the clergy. The result of my own observation is the conviction that those clergymen exercise the most lasting and beneficial influence who THINK THE LEAST ABOUT IT, and whose thoughts are not too frequently concentrated upon devising methods—or machinery—for making their office respected or their Church a Power. This observation applies first of all to our general work, parochial and ministerial, but it applies also to our influence with, and our power to help or convince, those minds over whom the clouds of doubt and the arguments and innuendos of the Atheist or the Agnostic have cast a shadow. If we want to meet and to remove this terrible trouble, if we want to counteract the influence of these arguments (as I pray God we may) we shall get on better if we first of all are clear in our own minds as to the considerations which weigh most with us and are the greatest help to us in our private thoughts on these matters, when we

are not thinking of looking for weapons of controversy. Influence such as we want in these days is like happiness, in *this* respect; we shall get more of it if we are not always trying and scheming to obtain it.

I make these preliminary observations for two reasons.

First, because I want to warn you at the outset that I am not about to produce a series of ready-made arguments, which can be carried as it were in one's hand ready to be produced at a public meeting or in sermons, or upon the arrival of an Atheist in our study. Ready-made arguments of this kind, like ready-made clothes, have this drawback, that they very often do not fit the individual case when most wanted for that purpose. Even as a matter of influence, the man who makes his listeners feel that he has thought out, at least, something for himself, and that he has carefully appreciated rather than blindly followed the thoughts of others, will leave a much more lasting impression behind him, than even a much abler reasoner is likely to create, who merely awakens in his audience a feeling of his own cleverness or learning, or a sense of his being a dangerous opponent to encounter upon the arena of a logical discussion. Let us remember we have to deal with the *whole man* in each man, with the tone of mind, with the practical reason, with

the conscience and the emotions; and a sharp or ready answer (which we have not made our own, and the force of which we secretly distrust ourselves), is not a weapon which, except in very rare cases, reaches the springs of this complex organization, or moves the *life* out of the darkness of doubt.

III. And, secondly, I am afraid I say what I do, in this introduction, from a somewhat personal motive, and from a desire to offer some sort of apology beforehand for what may seem to some of you the *egotism* of some of my subsequent remarks, and for my presumption in venturing (even when asked to do so) upon questions which can only be successfully approached by the Metaphysician, the Critic, or the Moral Philosopher.

With reference to the egotistic method to be found in some of the following observations, I can only say that I am sure it has tended to humiliate me by forcing upon me the knowledge of my own need of the help of others in trying to think for myself, and by engendering in me an appreciation of the extreme difficulty with which I can think at all so as to be of use to any one but myself. But if the sense of having listened to an egotist should still remain, I cannot help it. With Professor Grote, I can only say, "It is a cardinal maxim of mine that every one's thought should be his own, and that in reading what others

“ have written it is a matter continually occurring
“ to me how much better it would have been
“ if they had been more egotistic—if they had
“ described the manner in which the thing had
“ come to present itself to their mind, and let us
“ a little see their thought in the forming.”*

And then I must just add here, in further justification of the line of thought I am about to pursue, that I do not see how it is possible now for us to avoid the metaphysical, the critical, or the moral aspects of the questions at issue. If we do avoid them, we may as well give up the whole question at once, and “let things drive” as, and where, they may.

Mr. Bradlaugh, Mrs. Besant, Dr. Aveling, Mr. Forder, will not be persuaded to avoid these aspects of the controversy. They and their coadjutors know perfectly well how to assimilate and then to popularise the result of the Materialist Metaphysic, of the most “hacking” criticism, and of the most elaborate philosophical efforts for the complete secularization of morals.

Under these circumstances, do not let us be frightened at the physicist’s denunciation of metaphysics, or allow ourselves to be misled by the phraseology of those who use the word “as a

* Compare Professor Grote’s Introduction to his “*Explo-
ratio Philosophica*,” p. xlv. to the end.

“stone to throw at a dog,” and who yet go on, all the same, talking metaphysics without owning it, and invading the province of the metaphysician and the theologian at every turn. Let us, at any rate, become metaphysicians enough to know a metaphysical conception when we meet with it, even when it comes to us, as do the atoms of modern science, in the garb of a positive physical discovery.* So much, then, as an excuse for anything in this Paper which may be censured as trenching on the ground of the metaphysician. The fact is, I cannot “think upon thought,” I cannot meet the philosophical or the popular scepticism, I cannot confront the materialist’s or the atheist’s hypothesis, without using language which, in the mind of some, may lay me open to such a censure. I believe it would be better if we clergymen used such language more frequently than we do; and if more of us spent more time and labour in those metaphysical studies which, so long as men have the gifts

* Compare Lange, translated by Dr. Martineau:—“There is scarcely a more *naïve* expression of the materialism of the day than escapes from Büchner, when he calls the atoms of modern times ‘discoveries of natural science,’ while those of the ancients are said to have been ‘arbitrary speculative representations.’ In point of fact, the atomic doctrine of to-day is still what it was in the time of Democritus. It has *still not lost its metaphysical character.*”

of thought and speech, will never lose their interest for mankind, or cease to be of the deepest interest to the theologian.

And, finally, to bring these introductory suggestions to a close, I must just say, first, with reference to CRITICISM, that I think it will be an immense gain to the Church when every clergyman shall look upon it as part of his *work* (not as part merely of the occupation of his leisure hours) to endeavour to realise for himself the nature and extent of the evidence which exists in proof of, to say the least, the trustworthy character of the main outlines of the Gospel histories, and of the primitive doctrine of the Divine Person of our Lord. And then, secondly, with reference to *Moral Philosophy*, I will add that every clergyman, not to say every fairly-educated Christian, should spend at least some of his time and energy in endeavouring to gain, and to retain, an intelligent appreciation of the relations of Christian morals to the principle of moral philosophy generally, and to those of modern ethical systems in particular. Let us, then, now go back to the four main divisions of our first Paper. Take first the first division of the subject.

I.

(A) I. We were brought face to face there with *this* result. No God. No intelligent presiding Mind. No design, no final causes discernible in the universe.

Now, in dealing with these results, or alleged results, of modern science, to what sources of a sustaining character, to what line of thought and argument, have we found it most hopeful to recur?

So far as I am concerned, I feel sure that the soundest Theistic argument to start with is one which starts from an *intuitive certainty*. The one existence of which I am certain, of which I was certain long before I had any power to acquire or express the notion of existence in the abstract, is that of my own personal being. "I" am "I." This seems to me, notwithstanding objections which I shall notice immediately, to be the first and the ultimate certainty, although it may also be the first and the ultimate mystery. Nothing can be so certain to me as myself. My own personal identity remains an object of knowledge, of intuitive knowledge, whatever else gives way. And as it is with me, so it is with every man. It is this "I" upon the real existence of which I proceed in every act, in every observation, in every communication which I make with any

other person. When the scientist, be he student of organic or of inorganic nature, comes to me with a report of his observations, his discoveries, his inferences, it is an "I" who reports to an "I." Whatever may be predicated of the phenomena, whatever doubt there may be as to the nature of the proof of the objective reality of the external world at all (and I need not say there are very strong doubts entertained on this head), one thing is certain to the reporter—his own personal being, his own personal identity. One thing also is certain, to me, the listener or learner—my personal being, my personal identity. If the scientist tells me he can find no traces of mind in the phenomena he investigates, and that he brings with him no report of the existence of anything which is beyond the conceivable potentiality of Matter, or of Matter plus Force, to produce, I may not be able, I may not even wish, then and there, to dispute his conclusions: but of one thing at least I am certain, *Mind* was necessary to the observation and to the negative inference. An "I" was present at the process—an "I" brings the report. An "I" is offering indisputable evidence to me, and to himself, of the existence of the very Intelligence, of the very order of being, of which he reports that he cannot find traces through his science.

II. Here, then, is the known premise of exist-

ence, from which I might hope to be permitted to argue uninterruptedly to any conclusion which may be legitimately deduced from it. But any such a hope will be premature. I said that, as we proceeded, we should probably find, in our resumed considerations of this topic, yet further evidence of the thoroughness with which the grounds of even our Theistic creeds are undermined; and here such evidence arrives. There are many who will by no means allow even this apparently self-evident truth, and this intuitive verdict of consciousness, to pass by unchallenged. Perhaps from a secret intimation, which his own common sense seems to furnish, of the tremendous lever which this intuitive certainty affords to lift us at once out of the sphere of mere phenomena into that of real being, and from a sense of the blow which the very thought of it may inflict upon the very conception of a mindless universe, our atheistic philosopher will be found to deny the validity of the verdict of consciousness on this point, and to denounce this apparently innocent insistence upon my own personal knowledge of my personal identity as an instance of an almost ineradicable vice of the species—an instance, in short, of that tendency to *personify*,—which seems from his point of view to be almost the original sin of human nature.

I am not conscious, so I am invited to believe,

of this mysterious "self," or "Ego," or "mind," —I am conscious, only, of certain sensations; feelings, perceptions, and of the memory of them. What I call my mind or self is only a series or thread of these sensations and mental conditions. Mr. Baldwin M. Smith for instance, a writer in the *National Reformer*, thinks it is more correct to say that Mind is no entity, no substance, no function. It is but a word, a name; the word, the name, *the label* by which we express collectively the functions of the brain and nerves.

A greater than Mr. Smith, the great David Hume himself, has resorted to a not dissimilar figure of speech, in elucidation of his proof that we have no such idea of self, of its identity or simplicity, as I, in common with other mistaken persons, have ventured to affirm that we have. He tells us that setting aside certain metaphysicians, he ventures to affirm of the rest of mankind that they are nothing but a *bundle or collection* of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in perpetual flux and movement. The mind, continues the great sceptic, is a kind of *theatre* where several perceptions successively make their appearance; pass, re-pass, glide away and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations. There is no *simplicity* in it at one time, nor *identity* in different times, whatever natural propension we may have

to imagine that simplicity and identity. "The " comparison of the theatre," he continues, " must " not mislead us. They *are the successive perceptions* " *only that constitute the mind.*" *

III. But I always think when I read such remarks as these, that one is bound to go further and ask *this* question,—Are you not in a rhetorical tangle after all? This thread or series, is it a thread or series which is conscious of itself *as a series?* † And are *you* who are speaking thus of it, the thread or series? Does this label put itself upon itself? Does this bundle tie itself up? Does a thread or series or bundle of perceptions say "we, or I"? It is quite clear that the "mind" can only be spoken of in this fashion, when the

* See Hume's Treatise on Human Nature, page 334, vol. i. Green and Grose's edition. The whole section of "Personal Identity" is deeply interesting, and helps us to understand the genesis of much of our modern scepticism.

† Cf. Mr. Mill's Examination of Sir W. Hamilton's Philosophy :—" If we speak of the mind as a series of feelings, we " are obliged to complete the statement, by calling it a series " of feelings which is aware of itself as past and future, and we " are reduced to the alternative of believing that the mind or " Ego is something different from any feelings or possibilities " of them, or of accepting the paradox that something which " *ex hypothesi* is but a series of feelings, can be aware of itself " as a series. The truth is, that we are here face to face with " that final inexplicability at which, as Sir W. Hamilton " observes, we inevitably arrive when we reach ultimate " facts."

mind means to the speaker something other or something less than *himself*, and that the secret of the whole confusion is explained when we force ourselves to clearly state at every turn whether we use these two terms, the term "I" or "self," on the one hand, and the term "mind" or "bundle of perceptions" on the other, as identical or distinct.

If, when you talk of your mind as "my mind," you only mean a bundle or series of perceptions, passing and re-passing and gliding, then it is quite clear to me that you are using the term Mind to signify something distinct from that connoted by the term "I" or "self." But if, when you speak of your mind as "my mind," you really mean yourself, your whole self, your simple and identical self, then it seems to me impossible to define your mind as a bundle of perceptions, or as a label put upon anything—function or other thing—without talking nonsense, or, if that be too much to say, without at any rate using a mere figure of speech as if it were a real adequate definition.

I go back, then, to my own intuitive certainty, to what even Dr. Brown calls the irresistible law of our nature, which impresses us with the conviction of our identity.

I venture to think with Locke,* that it is

* Locke's Human Understanding, book iv. chap. x.

beyond question that man has a clear conception of his own being—he knows certainly that he exists, although I do not want to be rude enough to do more than quote from Locke his somewhat ironical remark, “that, if any one is sceptical
 “ enough to pretend to deny his own existence, let
 “ him for me, enjoy his beloved happiness, until
 “ hunger or some other pain convinces him to
 “ the contrary.”

Feelings, sensations, thoughts, are, to me, utterly empty concepts, unless I can call them “mine” or “thine” or some other man’s.* In the midst of all those “passing and re-passing
 “ and gliding perceptions,” I, the unit being, recollect (no mere bundle of perceptions can recollect), judge, decide. Nay, my very consciousness of the passing, the bygone, the successive character of these perceptions is due, I cannot help thinking, to the existence of my own permanent self. I should be incapable of retaining the memory of these states, or of the memory of change and succession at all, if they were not mine but “I.”

I feel sure then of my own personal identity, and I believe I shall feel sure of it for ever, unless

* “A mental state which is not produced or felt by an individual self is as inconceivable as a triangle without three angles, or a square without four sides.”—NOAH PORTER, on Human Intellect, p. 95.

I become insane, and then I may lose this consciousness, as many insane people do, and I may be bewildered and victimised by a number of uncontrolled and unconnected impressions, so that I may think that I am not one but many, like the man whose name was Legion, of whom our Gospels tell.

This consciousness of self, this intuitive certainty which each one has of his own existence and his own personal identity, should be firmly grasped and strongly insisted on, with one's self, for it may prove of great service as an aid to faith in an unseen Mind above us, to say nothing of the help it may afford to each man in realising his own personal responsibility to an Eternal Judge. You may remember the use made of this consciousness of identity by Butler, in the first chapter of his *Analogy*, that on a "Future Life." We may see in this consciousness an argument also, or at least I think the solid ground of an argument, for the personal nature and personal origin of *this* Life. It prepares us, at any rate for the apprehension of Personality and Unity of Being above us. It helps us to grasp the thought of the Permanence of Mind. We feel that time and change do not destroy this personal identity. Every particle of my body may have changed, there may not be a single particle in it which went to make it up thirty years ago, yet *I* am the same "I." *I* stood

upon that bridge, I entered upon that binding engagement, I uttered that passionate word. But not only so, thousands of thoughts have coursed through me, many mental states have come and gone, my ideas, my tastes, my very character may have changed again and again, but none of these changes affect in the least degree my personal identity nor the intuitive certainty which I have of that identity.

IV. This, then, is the known existence from which we have to start. Very well then, take this intuitive certainty of my own existence. What upon reflection, can I make of this, as an aid to my faith in a living personal God? Why can I not rest satisfied with my initial certainty and make the best of this existence, without prying into anything beyond, or asking any troublesome questions of myself about the why, the whence, the whither? The answer is not far to seek. I cannot rest satisfied with the mere recognition of this existence of mine as real, because by the very nature of that existence—being, as it is, intelligent and yet consciously finite—I am driven to seek *for a Cause* of it (and from all I can gather, every one else is equally driven to the same question). I apply to myself the same principle which I apply to every item of my experience, a principle which may be summed up briefly thus; “All finite and limited existence must have a

“Cause,” and it is contained in the very conception of Cause that there should be in it Power adequate to the production of the effect, and, in the case at any rate which we are now considering, power superior to the effect. This craving in man, this “*unwiderstehlicher Hang*,” after a Cause is a fact of experience. The existence of this conception in the human mind must be acknowledged, even by those who look upon it as a mistaken appetite, and a subjective delusion—as a phantom-chase in which the human race has got into the habit of indulging itself. I am driven by the causal appetency, which is, I think, the result of my sense of my own utter powerlessness to conceive of myself as *self-caused* or *self-sustained*, combined with an undefined conception of the possible existence of a Being who has the power of imparting existence, I am thus driven, I say, to ask for a *Superior Intelligence* to whom I may attribute my own Intelligence, and of whom I may say, “*it is He that hath made me, and not I myself.*” “*He holdeth my soul in life!*” The case I am in, is that of an intelligent being asking for an intelligent Cause of my being, and of a consciously finite and limited Being with no power of self-causation, asking for an adequate Cause, and therefore a Superior and Intelligent Cause of my existence. And ultimately, this craving or demand, this thirst of my intelligent nature, will find no

satisfaction until it reaches a *Supreme* Being and an Infinite as well as transcendent and Intellectual First Cause. This last assertion I make upon *this* ground, that, even if I am assured of a Cause of myself superior to myself and yet not infinite or self-existent, the same reasoning or craving will apply again in the case of the presumed transcendent but finite or dependent being (I must find HIS Superior), and thus, by one step or by many, I shall be led to acknowledge an Infinite Intelligent First Cause as the only adequate satisfaction to my intellectual cravings.*

The old faith, then, of my fathers, which proclaims the existence of One Supreme Intelligent Being, the First Cause of my Life, and of all intelligent life—is a faith which offers an adequate ground and reason for (which in short accounts for) the only existence of which I am intuitively certain, while at the same time it affords a real satisfaction to an ineradicable craving of the human mind.

Here surely then is a course of thought which may prove helpful to some. It almost at first sight might seem worthy of being called a proof of the Theist's position. That position as here

* Cf. The argument for the Intellectual Character of the first Cause, by George Gilbert Scott. A book to be carefully studied.

expounded is, as has been well said by Mr. Scott, "a conclusion of a syllogism of which the minor is the assertion of a fact which is intuitively known, and the major a principle which we of necessity apply to every item in the aggregate of experience, to every fact with which we are brought in contact." But suppose we agree to call these reflections by a less ambitious name than that of proof. Suppose we only say that what we have here suggested is surely some support of our faith in a living God. Even so, we shall be wise not to pass on too rapidly without asking ourselves what the student of physics or the inductive logician will be likely to say to us on this head.

V. (a) For instance, this ineradicable causal appetency which we thought might stand for our major premise, may we hope to pass unchallenged as we produce it? I am afraid not; and if so, we had better look to it.

(b) And then again as to this intuitive certainty of my own *Intelligence*, which was to serve as our minor premise. There were some ominous words at the close of Mr. Smith's proposals for a new* definition of Mind, which we passed by at the time without comment, words about the functions of the brain and nerves, which may serve to remind

* See page 62.

us of a tendency to which the exclusive study of *Physiology* is apt to give rise; a tendency, I mean, to obscure the clearness of our apprehension of the reality of Intelligence, and of the essential distinctness of Consciousness from all its physical accompaniments.

(a) And first with reference to *causality*. We shall be met, I need hardly tell you, by philosophical and scientific repudiation of our notion of Cause, or of any mysterious tie between Cause and effect, or of any active power in the cause, or of any passive power in the effect such as ordinary people and theologians dream of.

Hume has demonstrated, we may be reminded, that experience only shows *Conjunction*, not necessary connection between what we call cause and effect. The supposed "connection," or power of production, only exists in the imagination. It is the result of a *feeling*, of a customary transition of the imagination from one object to its usual attendant. "Nothing further," says our lucid sceptic, "is the case. Contemplate the subject on all sides; you will never find any other origin of that idea." The student of Physical Science, again, seems to bring corroborative evidence, so far at least as the negative side of Hume's speculations go. He can nowhere find this "mysterious tie." From every department of scientific research, be it inorganic or organic nature, be it the earth

or the sky, the plant or the animal, there is but one report,—all that can be observed is an invariable order of succession. A cause, in philosophical and scientific language, does not mean a something in which there resides some mysterious “power” or “affection” which produces another something. It means only an invariable antecedent,* or concurrence of antecedents. An effect is, in philosophical, or, at least, in scientific terminology, a fact or event, or better, a phenomenon or concurrence of phenomena which has been observed to be a constant consequent of such a concurrence of antecedent phenomena, as we call a “cause.”

Well, if this is all the sceptical philosophy, through its most illustrious modern representative, can tell us of the nature and origin of our notion of Cause; if these are the only causes the man of science can find for us in nature, I think we need not be angry with either philosopher or scientist for telling us the result in the plainest possible language. But we may fairly say that they have not found what we want, nor what they want, yet. Certainly they have not satisfied that original intellectual craving of the human mind after an

* Mr. Mill's amended definition is “our invariable and “*unconditional* antecedent.” But for the purposes before us in this paper we have no need to discuss this amendment nor Dr. Reid's “*Reductio ad absurdum*,” which it was designed to meet.

efficient Cause which first set Philosophy and Science agoing, and keeps them agoing now.

The conclusions of Hume may be as he puts it, “agreeable to scepticism,” and yet the words which I will now quote from him have a ring of sadness in them, which makes me suspect that, as a man, he was dissatisfied with his own discoveries, concerning the weakness and narrow limit of human reason and capacity. Listen to what follows: “And what stronger instance can
“ be produced of the surprising ignorance and
“ weakness of the understanding than the present.
“ For surely, if there be any relation among
“ objects, which it imports us to know perfectly,
“ it is that of cause and effect. On this are
“ founded all our reasonings concerning matter of
“ fact or existence. By means of it alone we retain
“ any assurance concerning objects which are
“ removed from the present testimony of our
“ memory and senses. The only immediate
“ utility of all sciences is to teach us how to
“ control and regulate future events by their
“ causes. Our thoughts and inquiries are there-
“ fore every moment employed about this relation:
“ yet so imperfect are the ideas which we form
“ concerning it, that it is impossible to give any
“ just definition of cause, except what is drawn
“ from something extraneous and foreign to it.*”

* Hume's Essays, vol. ii. p. 76.

There is no tone of triumph or of satisfaction here. The fact being beyond a doubt that even the great philosopher's elaborate and unsparing scepticism left him still a man demanding a cause, and not a mere conjunction; a man dissatisfied, although a sceptic delighted, to find that a relation, about which his thoughts and inquiries were every moment occupied, should turn out an illusion after all.

The philosopher has not found what the man is wanting, and by his own admission the man of science is in the same position. This fact does not lessen our interest in the philosophical theory; it rather increases our interest in it. Neither does it lessen our gratitude to the man of science. It increases our gratitude, since it helps us to feel that we are dealing with an honest reporter, and with one who will not be angry with us if we venture to look beyond the visible and tangible sphere of his observations *for a cause*, an efficient cause, which he cannot discover in that sphere, not even with the aid of the most delicate instruments furnished by science to the senses. Wishing then all light to the philosopher, and good speed to the physical student, we pass (for his sake and ours) out of the sphere of their observations, and falling back upon our irresistible causal appetency, and upon the judgment, synthetic and yet *à priori*, which that appetency drives us to affirm as universally and necessarily

valid, we still claim to assert that of that consciously finite intelligent existence, of which each man is intuitively certain, there must be a Cause, an efficient Cause, an adequate and intelligent Cause, in which or in Whom there must be Power to create and to sustain this existence. Physical Science says she can find no such a Power, nay, can find no Cause at all in nature either by observation or experiment. But this failure does not give it the right to *contradict* the causal judgment, nor to claim the invariable antecedents as capable of satisfying the causal appetency, nor to blame us if we look elsewhere for the Cause, the Power, the Intelligence, which does satisfy it. Our major premise, therefore, remains intact, and we may pass on, carrying *the man* with us, if not the physicist.

(b) But before we leave this question there is a very needful caution which has to be uttered respecting the *minor* premise, that of the certainty of our own intelligence. It is a caution which is suggested by a tendency which the exclusive study of *Physiology* is apt to generate almost unconsciously in men's minds;—the tendency, that is, to obscure the clearness of our apprehension of intelligence, as generically distinct from any of its material environments. The result of this tendency, against which we must be upon our guard, is to lend the apparent sanction of

science or of exact research, to the materialist philosophy which identifies or confuses the organs of sense with feeling and thought, and which treats Intelligence as only a function of the nervous system.

It is of great importance, in order to resist this influence, to keep a strong hold upon those declarations of eminent men of science, in which they are found insisting upon the distinction between thought and the activities of even the most delicately organised material organs of our bodies. "There is an impassable chasm between
" movements of definite cerebral atoms, and the
" primary facts which I can neither define nor
" deny. I feel pleasure or pain; I taste a
" sweetness; smell a rose scent; hear an organ
" tone, together with the immediate assurance
" they give, *therefore I exist.*" This is a quotation from a man who cannot certainly be classed among those whose witness has any theological taint in it.

Or take the following from Dr. Tyndall:

"Thought and sentiment are accompanied
" doubtless by movements in the molecules of
" the brain, but the mode of connection between
" the two is simply to us unthinkable. The
" connection between mind and matter is not
" necessary but empirical. If we could see all
" that takes place in the skull as clearly as we

“ observe the outer phenomena; if we could note,
“ for instance, that the sentiment of love was
“ always accompanied by a spiral movement of
“ the brain particles to the right, while that of
“ hatred was indicated by a spiral movement to
“ the left, we should still be as far as ever from
“ conceiving the nature of the law which ordered
“ it.”

Or take the following from Dr. MAUDSLEY.*

“ No observation of the brain, no investigation
“ of its chemical activities, gives us the least
“ information respecting the states of feeling that
“ are connected with them. It is certain that
“ the anatomist and physiologist might pass
“ centuries in studying the brain and nerves
“ without even suspecting what a pain or pleasure
“ is, if they had not felt both; even vivisections
“ teach us nothing, except through the interpre-
“ tation we give them through observation of our
“ own mental processes.”

Or take the following suggestive statement from
Mill's Logic (vol. i. p. 56, Seventh Edition):

“ In cases of sensations, another distinction has
“ to be kept in view, which is often confounded,
“ and never without mischievous consequences.
“ This is the distinction between the sensation
“ itself, and the state of the bodily organs which

* “ Physiology of Mind,” p. 61.

“ precedes the sensation and which constitutes
 “ the physical agency by which it is produced.
 “ One of the sources of confusion is the division
 “ commonly made of feelings into bodily and
 “ Mental. Philosophically speaking, there is no
 “ foundation at all for this distinction; even
 “ sensations are states of the sentient mind, not
 “ states of the body, as distinguished from it.
 “ What I am conscious of when I see the colour
 “ blue is a feeling of blue colour, which is one
 “ thing; the picture on my retina or the pheno-
 “ menon of hitherto mysterious nature which
 “ takes place in my optic nerve or in my brain, is
 “ another thing, of which I am not at all conscious,
 “ and which scientific investigation alone could
 “ have apprised me of.* These are states of my
 “ body, but the sensation of blue which is the
 “ consequence of these states of my body is not
 “ a state of body; that which perceives and is
 “ conscious is called mind. When sensations

* I venture most earnestly to commend to my readers a careful study of Professor Grote's chapter, On Sensation, Intelligence, and Will, in his *Exploratio Philosophica*; especially I would ask for a careful study of his remarks there on *sight* and seeing. They happily illustrate Crabbe's lines, which he quotes and justifies philosophically:—

“ It is the mind that sees, the outward eyes
 Present the object, but the mind descries.”

I cannot help wondering whether Mr. Smith has read this book of Grote's.

“are called bodily feelings, it is only as being
 “the class of feelings which are immediately
 “occasioned by bodily states.”

I make these few quotations merely with a view of helping us to realise how men of science and inductive philosophers are often obliged to speak of the mind as generically distinct from the body, and to point out the danger of confusing the material organization with a mental state of any sort, and *à fortiori* the danger of confusing a material organization with intelligence or mind itself or the “Ego.”

(c) Further, besides keeping hold of these quotations, or of similar avowals from similar sources, we should try, I think, to hold the physiologist fast to that important declaration of the physical student, in which he tells us that in nature he cannot find “causes,” but only invariable successions. When we are told that affection of the nerve causes the sensation, or that there is in matter very highly organized a potentiality of producing thought, and even an “Ego,” we must remind our informant again that the most that he can mean is that he finds, or expects to find, an invariable succession between these two apparently utterly unconnected series. There is “no mysterious tie.” There is no childish notion of power, or of adequate power being discoverable in matter of any sort, to cause anything or any

mind. The mystery remains a mystery still. The chasm is still impassable. There is an invisible *something* still wanted to account for intelligence—to account *for me*. I am intuitively certain, I repeat, of my own existence, of my own intelligent being. I am not certain in the same way (although I do not at all dispute your scientific *inferences*) of the existence of that material organism which I call my body. I *infer* that you are right when you explain this material organized frame to me. I am willing to act upon the supposition of the truth of your report. I am grateful for your discoveries, but they do not account to me for my own existence. I certainly cannot accept them as introducing me either to the efficient cause of it or to an adequate *substitute* for it.

I have tried then to look all round for the most formidable or the most dangerous of the arguments or tendencies against which I have to make way, or which we are likely to meet with in these days when we affirm that our faith in an Intelligent Creator is helped by the consideration of the reality of our finite existence. I do not say there are no other arguments or tendencies which may assail this conclusion. But I have named those which are most likely, I think, to accost us in the present condition of our popular philosophy and in the prevailing tone and fashion of so much of modern unbelief.

B. I. I turn now to another support, which our understanding affords to our faith in the first article of our Creed. We approach the *Physico-Theological* argument, that "old and respectable argument" which, in some one or other of its forms, is always popular with the students of Natural Theology, and which I do not think that modern science has essentially weakened.

We go now to "Nature," or the external world, that world, of the reality and independent existence of which, reflection upon the evidence afforded by our senses enables us to feel convinced.

Into that world I go, with my consciousness of my own dependent personal existence, and convinced of the existence of the Supreme Being from whence I am derived, and of whose power and will I am an effect. I go now to "Nature," I approach it *prejudiced*, if you will, by my own previous reflections and conclusions, prejudiced in favour of the teaching which tells me that I shall find in that world more, indeed, than human intelligence can construe completely, but yet an ORDER, as well as a grandeur which only mind can construe at all, and which therefore only mind can have produced or sustained. I carry with me, too, my "causal appetency," my inherent quest of causes, a craving to find a power adequate to the production of such universal order. I want,

I expect, rightly or wrongly, to find evidences of a Power with a purpose, which implies a Person with a will, persistent, and self-consistent; a Person or Intelligence with a complete mastery of every atom through all time, with such a complete mastery as seems likely only to be found in one to whom the minutest constituents of the ordered universe owe their original nature—their very existence. Further, when I speak of power or of force applied to material things, I refer, involuntarily perhaps, but really, to a notion which I owe to my *consciousness* of EFFORT when I exert force to put matter in motion myself. My inherent quest of causes will continue to drive me on until I find, through faith if not through physics, indications and proofs in the universe of the operation of the only efficient cause with which I am intimately acquainted—Mind, Purpose, Personality.* Has physical science destroyed the possibility of such proofs? Does it bring news of any discoveries which contradict my expectations and make “the hope drunk wherein

* See Herschel's celebrated judgment, quoted by Dr. Martineau, in his “Modern Materialism,” p. 55. No student of Metaphysics should be without this invaluable pamphlet of Dr. Martineau's. It will repay the most careful analysis, and is a most refreshing illustration of the possibility of combining depth of thought with exquisite lucidity and beauty of language.

“ I dressed myself ? ” Note, please, I do not say, Has science given rise to any *speculations* which may have this effect? I desire to confine myself to its conclusions, and to those broad and well attested generalizations which each experiment and each discovery confirms.

II. Take one or two illustrations of my meaning. Take the ever-enlarging and ever-strengthening belief in the Reign of Law, in the Uniformity of Nature, which the experience of mankind strengthens from generation to generation, and which has become one of the foregone conclusions of science. Take it as true that Dr. Chalmers' eloquent description of the Constancy of Nature is vouched for by the gross and general experience of men, and is, in its allusions to the verdict of science, still more strikingly expressive of what is now universally believed, than it could have been when the words first proceeded from the eloquent lips of that Chrysostom of the North. Suppose, if I may quote his own exquisite language: “ That nature's seeming anomalies can “ be traced to a law that is inflexible, that what “ might appear at first to be the caprices of her “ waywardness are in fact the evolutions of a “ mechanism that never changes; that, the more “ thoroughly she is sifted and put to the test by the “ interrogations of the curious, the more certainly “ they will find that she walks by a rule which

“ knows no abatement, and perseveres with obedient
“ footsteps in that even course from which the eye
“ of strictest scrutiny has never yet detected one
“ hair-breadth of deviation. Suppose, that even
“ the fitful agitations of the weather have their law
“ and their principle; that the intensity of every
“ breeze, and the number of drops in every shower,
“ and the formation of every cloud, and all the
“ occurring alternations of storm and sunshine, and
“ the endless shiftings of temperature, and those
“ tremulous varieties of the air which our instru-
“ ments have enabled us to discover, but have not
“ enabled us to explain, still follow each other by a
“ method of succession which, though greatly more
“ intricate, is yet as absolute in itself as the order
“ of the seasons, or the mathematical courses of
“ astronomy.” And suppose, finally, that each
new accession that has been made to science,
since Dr. Chalmers’ time, has strengthened and
deepened in the minds of civilized men those
impressions of the all-embracing uniformity of
Nature; the question has still to be asked, Has
science anything to tell us which prevents a
reasonable and thoughtful man—already certain
of his own existence and convinced of the intel-
lectual nature of the Cause of that existence—
from inferring from this magnificent spectacle of
order that an Eternal Mind, persistent in its
sublime purpose, untiring in the exercise of an

infinite skill, capable of inexhaustible effort, is the author and sustainer of that whole Kosmos—before which, as Kant has it, our conception (or rather judgment) dissolves into an astonishment all the more eloquent because it is dumb.*

III. Supposing I cannot *find* GOD in Nature, or prove to demonstration His existence from Nature alone, yet having found Him within me, am I not entitled to argue that I see without me the working of the same Power to which I owe my being? Is there anything in the unbroken order of the universe to suggest the reasonableness of excluding the thought of a *will*, a purpose, a skill, a power of creation, from my conception of its origin? So far as I can see, the unbroken order *suggests* the *Mind*, instead of grounding an argument for its exclusion. It is surely of the very essence of intelligence to produce unity and order in every sphere of its influence, and, as has been well said, the higher the type of the mind the more strongly this peculiarity is displayed.

* Kant's *Kritik*, p. 477, Hartenstein's Edition—"Dass sich unser Urtheil vom Ganzen in ein sprachloses, aber desto beredteres Erstaunen auflösen muss!" Kant himself seems for the moment overcome by the force of an argument which he afterwards says has not in itself the force of a demonstrative certainty without some *other support*. We have shown that it *has* other support.

My highest conception of the work of mind is that of a personal power and personal influence producing order in every department of its operation, both in the minute and the magnificent, and, so producing and sustaining it, that the power is felt rather than seen, hidden very often from the notice of an ordinary observer, and working so constantly and so quietly that some of its most exquisite adjustments of means to ends wear the air of "*unconscious adaptations.*"* Is there anything in the discoveries of modern science which forbids me, on pain of being excommunicated from the society of those who hold on by facts, from perceiving in Nature, evidences, or, at least, indications of the working of such a power there? May I not, at any rate, claim the uniformity of Nature, the eternal reign of law, as corroborating my inference from my own existence to that of one intelligent, one infinite Cause? May not God's persistent purpose be offered as a reasonable explanation of the unbroken continuities of Nature?

It is a tremendous conclusion, as Paley says, that there is a God, One God! But no one can say that science contradicts it. I do not say it proves it. But what I do feel sure of is, that the wider the sweep of its legitimate generalisations shall become, the nearer it approaches the Utopia

* See Clifford, *On the Lungs*, quoted page 15.

that sometimes flits before it, when in its search after unity it shall resolve all derivative laws into cases of one all-embracing simple ultimate law, the nearer it will bring us to a proof of the existence of the One Infinite Person to whom we are forced to attribute the origin of our finite yet inquiring minds.

C. I. But before I close this necessarily imperfect consideration of this section of our subject, it is only right to notice one discovery or workable hypothesis of modern physical science, which seems to many utterly destructive of the theistic position, at least so far as that position rests upon the physico-theological argument, and claims the suffrages of the students of "Nature." We are now becoming accustomed to the conception that the universe as it at present exists is the result of evolution. The present complex assemblage of phenomena has a history, and has taken unnumbered ages to arrive at its present stage in the march of its progress; and, at each stage, higher and higher, that is, I suppose, more and more delicately organised, forms have been originated. Only permit yourself, we are told, to deal freely with past time, and not to be afraid to give things time to have worked, and your imagination must be dull indeed if you cannot conceive of the genesis of a world from the primordial homogeneous atoms; homogeneous to start with, but gradually developing

heterogeneity as the ages rolled. The universe, it is now asserted, was not made nor created, but rolled out of the pre-existent particles, by a process of evolution carried on during the ceaseless movements of these eternal and immortal things. Well, I never saw these atoms, but invisibility is no proof of non-existence, and therefore, although of course their existence is at best but a probable inference, I will not spend time in incredulous inquiries for further information about them. They are, I presume, indivisible extended solids, out of which this Marvel has been evolved. How they came into existence, no one, I suppose, pretends to be able to tell us; the genesis of an atom being as difficult to account for as that of a planet. But, under any theory, they are, I suppose, something more than adaptations of already pre-existing substances.* They *are* the pre-existing substances. But, even so, can it be seriously maintained that they are self-caused? And, if not, then the more simple and homogeneous these primordial atoms are proved to be, the more am I lost in wonder at the magnificence of the Intelligence to whom, as it seems to me, you must attribute their mysterious capacities for evolving life and breath and all things. No man can take even an ordinary seed, it may chance

* Bradlaugh, quoted ante, part I., p. 16.

of wheat or of some other grain, into his hand, without being lost in wonder as he thinks of the mysterious powers of reproduction or of development, of which it is the germ and envelope! But the thought of what must have been *rolled in* to the primordial atoms, these indestructible germs, in order that the ordered universe can have been evolved from them in millions of years, is a thought which drives me to my knees—and which forces from me the exclamation, “O Lord, how “glorious are Thy works! Thy thoughts are very “deep!” Of course this state of mind and this involuntary expression of admiring adoration may arise from my being *prejudiced*, from my going to external nature on the look-out, as it were, for Mind behind the scenes. But, even if this be so, it ought to be remembered that the prejudice is the result of my having previously convinced myself, by a by no means hasty or irrational process, of the existence of an Infinite Mind, of a living Author and Sustainer of my own existence. The prejudice therefore in question amounts rather to a reasonable readiness to acknowledge the weight of any evidence in the history of nature which suggests the presence and the result of Persistent Purpose and of vast foresight as well as of Creative Power. Such seems to be the case, such seem to be the suggestions irresistibly forced upon us, as we trace back in thought the course

of nature in the past until we are arrested at the presumably primordial germs from which, as by the hand of some mighty magician, the *present* universe has been gradually drawn forth.

II. I may, of course, be misled by my theological bias, but I cannot help feeling that the old Hebrew conception of the Eternal Jehovah, Jehovah of Sabaoth, is one upon which the new science helps us to dwell with an ever-deepening wonder and awe. All seems, after all, summed up in that magnificent expression, *Lord God of Hosts*—Lord God of the heavens and the earth and of all the *host* of them! The disciplined hosts of the universe have received their being, their direction, their organization from Him! The stately march of the vast procession of things has been conducted by a wisdom which cannot have been the product of their accidental concurrence, and which must have existed before the worlds were.

But forgive me for reverting thus to the Old Testament Name of God. I have done so because we seem to gain thus, by the help of the light of the new science upon the Old Revelation, a grander and a less misleading conception of the Great Creator and Sustainer, than we could ever have done by merely resorting to figures of speech drawn from the mechanical arts of the builder or the architect, useful as such figures of speech may sometimes be to the intellect and imagination.

But be this as it may, we have said enough to justify us in concluding that it does not appear that our faith in a living God is in any way weakened, or rendered less reasonable, by the conception or the hypothesis of Evolution; or by the history or explanation of the traces of that Evolution which carry us back into the indefinitely extended past.

“It is” (to quote again Paley’s well-known exclamation), “it is a tremendous conclusion that “there is a God.” Sometimes I feel that some of us do not *make enough* of this conclusion, do not feel sufficiently grateful when we are led to recognise that any thoughtful man of science, or any philosopher has at least got so far and can go so far with us as this. Sometimes, too, I think that we do not frequently enough call attention in pulpit or in class-room to the supports which help to sustain our faith in Him, and to the light which the science of the present seems often to cast upon the awful nature of His Power and the reliable persistency of His Will.

I say the science of the *present*; for what may be the teaching or the hypotheses of the science of the future, I have no means of even guessing. The rate of change of scientific hypotheses is so rapid that, as the late Professor Clark Maxwell well points out, twenty years hence we may find a disagreement between her then verdict and her

present one. But whatever may be the course of the human mind in its study of Nature, whatever its theories as to the genesis of things, I feel as sure as I am or can be of anything which is yet in the future, when I add, in concluding this section of the subject, that it will only be science, *falsely so called*, which will either scorn or crush the belief of man, in his best moments, in the Infinite and Intelligent Cause of all—a living and Eternal God. The foremost men of science will still be able then as now to enter into the spirit and to embrace the faith of one of the most eminent of scientists, and one of the most humble and heavenly minded of men, who said a few days before his death, to his friend, “ *Old chap! I have read up many queer religions; there is nothing like the old thing after all. I have looked into most philosophical systems, and I have seen that none will work without a God.*”

D. I. You will be, all of you, beginning to be anxious for some sign from me that I do not intend to make this Paper interminable, and you would recognise, perhaps, the passage from the first to the second main division of our previous Paper, as an indication of the approach of such a welcome sign. I will not delay much longer the consideration of that second division. But bear with me a moment while I remind you of that PESSIMISM of which I spoke in my first paper, that pessimism which plays, as Dr. Martineau

says, the cynic to the universe, and which distresses and haunts so many thoughtful men.

The way in which such men have put their difficulty before me sometimes, has caused me much self-questioning, and many a sigh for "light and leading." They may be overheard throwing their doubts into the form of a *question*: "Granted the irresistible force of the evidence for the existence of an Infinite and Intelligent Cause; granted the splendour of the conception, such as you expound it, of a persistent purpose of One Eternal Will, creative and controlling; can we from Nature arrive at any definite conclusions, any trustworthy indications, as to the *disposition*, the benevolence or the malevolence, of that Eternal Being towards the creatures of His hand?"

Now it is useless to attempt to deny that one of the besetting difficulties of Natural Theology is to find a satisfactory answer to such a demand.

The thought of the pain, of the apparently undeserved and hopeless and useless suffering of which this earth has been for countless ages the theatre, is a thought which generates harassing and harrowing questions, as to the goodness of God; and, apart from the *Revelation of God in Christ*, I must own I know of no answer to those questions, no answer which even hope itself can seize on as completely reassuring.

I suppose that each man has some difficulty, some thought which weighs at times very heavily, and which he feels is too heavy to be rolled off without the aid of the Christ who has redeemed him. Such a difficulty, such a heaviness assails my own mind at times when I think of the indifference, the apparent cruelty, the devouring maw, of Nature's laws. As a Christian, indeed, I can afford to look at this awful thought steadily and often. Nay, if I want words to express my sense of the incubus which seems to lie upon the universe, and which suppresses at times the Hosannas of rapture, I can find none so apt as those of the great Apostle, when he tells us that "*the whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain until now.*"* But at the same time I must candidly avow that, on the ground of "*Natural Theology,*" I am frequently embarrassed as I think of the problem which it sometimes ventures to solve, that of the *Character*, the *Nature*, and the *Disposition* towards the sen-

* The following words of CHRISTLIEB are worth pondering. "Büchner and others frequently argue on the erroneous supposition that theologians who believe in the Bible look upon the world in its present condition as absolutely perfect, and they seek by various examples to prove the contrary. If they would take the trouble to turn to Romans viii. 19 ff. they might see that, long before their arguments, the imperfection of the world in its *present* condition was taught by Scripture."

tient Creation, of the Eternal God. This being the case I shall revert to this painful and difficult matter again, in the second division of this Paper, in which I shall have to bring into prominence the more strictly Christian aspect of the whole subject. In the few remarks which follow here, I shall try to offer only the considerations which Natural Theology seems capable of affording or suggesting on this point to her students.

II. In the first place, I think we learn from a contemplation and study of Nature, that the production of pleasure, or of the pleasing or soothing sensations of which animal life is capable, is not a *paramount object* of its Author and Governor. As things are now, and as things have been so far as we can trace them back, the process of creation and of development seems too terrific to permit us to rest in what I may venture to call the *Hedonist-view* of God. Neither does it seem to me that Nature indicates that the paramount object of its Creator is the preservation of *individual* sensitive existence, except for a very limited period, nor even that of any one type or species, except for a correspondingly limited period.

If no being can be called good in whose works and ways one or other (or both) of these ends cannot be discovered as their final cause, then I do not see how from Nature alone you can say that

God is good. I speak with great diffidence, with great deference, but so far as I can see the law which is paramount, and the furthest reaching in Nature, is the one which combines into one decree these two clauses: "*Be fruitful and multiply—slay and eat.*" And the main object, if I may venture so to construe in inadequate language the apparent object of an infinite Mind proclaimed in facts, seems to be the production, *through sacrifice*, of higher life out of the death of the lower. The more I read and think and try to observe of "Nature," the more deeply does this view of God's work in Nature seem ingrained in me. This may at first seem rather a melancholy conclusion, and it certainly does add a sadness often to my daily life, even to my daily meals, but it adds, too, a *sacredness* to them, and helps me to find an answer to my friend who asked as we sat down to feast together, "*Why should this act of all others be made religious in this arbitrary way 'by 'grace'?*"

If then this be the teaching of Nature as to the end of its Creator's work in her, we can see how readily she lends herself to the charge or the suspicion of cruelty or indifference to suffering,—especially in the ears of those who go to Nature with a feeling that if her God were good and benevolent there would be no *pain* inherent in her system at all.

III. On the other hand, if we fully recognise the purpose which, as I have said, Nature seems to lead us to infer is paramount in the mind of her Author, we shall be very much struck with the immense and incalculable amount of happiness which prevails in the sentient creation at any given moment, and which has prevailed upon the earth through countless ages of prehistoric times.

The feeling which will then attend our contemplation of Nature will be one of wonder that a design and a method, which, prior to experience, we should have said must be attended at every turn by individual suffering, and must have almost excluded pleasure from the universe, should yet have been executed in a manner so wise and so kind as to have filled the earth with such a vast aggregate of pleased and enjoyable existences.

At this point I would venture to recommend, to the harassed mind, the careful study of the twenty-sixth chapter of Paley's "Natural Theology," on the "*Goodness of the Deity*"; a chapter which sets out with the two following propositions: 1. In a vast plurality of instances in which contrivance is perceived, the design of the contrivance is *beneficial*. 2. The Deity has superadded *pleasure* to animal sensations, beyond what was necessary to any other purpose, or when the

purpose, so far as it was necessary, might have been effected by the operation of pain.

No one, I think, can read what Paley goes on to say in proof or in illustration of these two positions, without feeling refreshed and delighted. Very few, I think, can turn from the perusal of Paley's very beautiful description of the happier phases of sensitive creation, without feeling that they have been reminded of some instances of the amplitude of Divine benignity which they had forgotten or overlooked. The instances which he cites, although they may be *selected* instances, selected with skill from the teeming life of the world, are certainly, as he maintains, instances which cover large provinces of sensitive existence, each case being the case of millions—of myriads. It is worth remembering, too, what we are apt to forget—that in each individual of these myriads how many things must go right, for it to be at ease, yet how large a proportion is so, in every assignable instance !

What Paley here says, too, about PAIN should be carefully studied, not the less so because it is clear that Mr. Mill had arrived, through what was probably an independent study, at similar conclusions to Paley ; although our more modern Natural Theologian (Mill) seems unable to feel grateful, or unwilling to express gratitude, to God for the amount of proof, which he admits to

exist, of Paley's, and his own, conclusion, "that
" there is no indication of any *contrivance* in
" Nature to *produce pain*." *

Nevertheless, as I must add, despite Mill's criticism of what he calls the *clumsiness* of the contrivance employed for some other purpose, I cannot help turning over my Paley again, and feeling some relief of mind when I read such a passage as this which follows: "No anatomist
" ever discovered a system of organisation
" calculated to produce pain and disease, or in
" explaining the parts of the human body ever
" said: 'This is to irritate; this is to inflame;
" this duct is to convey the gravel to the kidneys;
" this gland to secrete the humour which forms
" the gout;' if he comes at a part of which he
" does not know the use, the most he can say is,
" it is useless; no one ever suspects it is put
" there to incommode, to annoy, or to torment."

I particularly commend, indeed, the whole chapter to your attentive reconsideration. It is written in Paley's happiest vein, and if we read it without expecting too much from it—without, that is, expecting that it will prove that pleasing sensations are the end and aim of God's work in Nature—we shall be relieved to find with what a vast mercy God has carried out a work, and is

* J. S. Mill's *Essays on Religion*, p. 191.

carrying out a purpose, in which some other end than the production of pleasure is clearly predominant.

II.

I. The time has now arrived for me to pass to the reconsideration of the second main division of our previous Paper—that which we introduced by a quotation from Mr. Mill, in which he expounds the method in which all religions tend to be discussed,* less, as he says, as intrinsically true or false, than as products thrown up by certain states of civilization. There are difficulties in this part of the subject which I know from my own experience are real oppressions to the minds of many thoughtful persons. The influence of the tone of mind which Mr. Mill here so lucidly describes is often realized by a clergyman when he feels it his duty to urge upon his lay friends the claims of missions to heathens. And I do not hesitate to aver my belief that the tendency to which Mr. Mill here refers is one which keeps back a large number of persons from an active interest in Missions, and which seriously, although indirectly, affects the income of Missionary Societies.

* See first Paper, p. 22.

With this particular result, however, of the tendency in question, I am not now professing to deal. I mention it merely as an illustration of the way in which the practical work of the Church is often hindered by the operation of speculative opinions which at first sight might seem to influence only a few students or philosophers, and to be hardly worth the notice of practical people. Here I am rather anxious to dwell upon the tendency itself and its more general influence upon men's estimate of the Christian Faith.

The sort of feeling which arises in men's minds nowadays upon this subject is one which reminds me of the answer of a sedate fellow-commoner, who, when asked what he thought of Baptismal Regeneration, replied that he thought it was "a very good thing in its way." What he felt about a particular Church doctrine very many feel about the whole Christian Faith. They think it is a very good religion "in its way." But, then, they also feel, so are other religions in their way. And why, if this be so, "worry savages," or attempt to convert Mahommedans or Buddhists to your religion, when their own is evidently so much better suited for them than yours can be? Your Christianity (so many seem to be saying, and more thinking), your Christianity is what it is by reason of a long train of antecedent circumstances, extending through ages

behind us, of which circumstances, together with those of your present environment, your religion is really the product. And the same assertions, the same scientific account, applies, it is thought, to all other religions. Given the observed phenomena of individual human organisms, studied under the guide of the biologist, and the verified results of the scientific historical method under the guidance of Sociology, and we can trace all these religions, your own included, to a perfectly natural source ! All religions are much more alike, it is said, than you would think at first. They all have many legends, cosmogonies, moral maxims, rewards and punishments, about which, when you go to the bottom, when you take things, as Hume would say, "pretty deep," there is a strong family likeness. They all stand in some relation, more or less harmonious, to the Consciousness of the masses ; when they cease to stand in any such relation they will gradually lose their hold upon the age, unless indeed the masters of the mysteries are sufficiently dexterous in bringing them into some sort of at least apparent harmony with that consciousness, in which case they obtain a new lease of life. But, of course, all this is not apparent to a one-sided enthusiast or an earnest believer, if it were they would cease to be enthusiasts, or to believe. No doubt, they tell us, you are firmly persuaded of

the reality of the object of your faith. So are other religionists of the reality of the object of theirs. But this proves nothing, they go on to say, as to the real objective existence of any corresponding object either in your case or theirs. It rather seems to afford, to a candid onlooker, the proof that there is no such an object *in rerum natura*, as that on which either of you fasten your faith. The only thing of which invulnerable proof seems to be afforded is that of the widespread and almost irresistible tendency of the human mind to reach out towards the Infinite, and to aspire to commune with some unknown and unknowable Absolute Being.

Now there is no doubt in my mind that these feelings, whose expression I have thus ventured to paraphrase, are becoming more general than we clergy have yet realized them to be, and that they have a very large influence over men's ways of looking at the Christian religion, and over their methods and manner of educating their children.

II. The question arises, how are we to deal with these feelings? How are we to meet these deep and powerful streams of tendency? Upon this point I must ask leave to say a few words which I think may prove of use.

(a) Passing by the obvious remark, that we find positive philosophers compelled to own how widely spread and how apparently ineradicable

is the sense in the human mind of the need of communion with an Infinite, or, at least, a Supernatural Being, the first thing to be said, and said so as to make men feel that we really mean it, is that we have no interest whatever, as Christians, in pouring any ridicule or contempt upon "other religions," or in depreciating the value of any truth or beauty which may be found latent or expressed in any doctrine or myth of the Brahmin, the Buddhist, the Mahommedan, or in the savages' religions, or which can be traced in the exploded mythologies of the defunct religious systems of antiquity. All light is from the Source of Light. We do not look upon our Lord as the founder of a rival religion, but as the Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. There, in Him, was and is the light, the true light which lighteth every man; at His coming that light was made manifest, but not created. He was in the world, in the hearts of men, although they knew Him not. We believe He is still working in men now, although they know Him not yet, and have never yet recognised His voice as that of the Word of God. We do not speak thus in spite of our Faith, but because of our Faith, and of our attachment to the fundamental doctrine of the Catholic religion. We do not speak thus because we want to find some excuse for the temporary indulgence of a charitable

disposition, or for getting out of the groove of our narrow religious associations. We speak thus because, with the Bible and the Creed in our hands, we must do violence to both if we take narrow views of the Person of Christ and of His work in the universe, or if we look upon Him as having shed no light beyond the pale of Christendom, or as having stirred no yearnings after goodness and glory save in the minds of those who are consciously to themselves under His inspiring illumination, and consciously to themselves the objects of His eternal charity. If we believed our Lord to be *less* than He really is; if we narrowed our conception of Him so that we only regarded Him as a great teacher who was murdered eighteen hundred years ago, and whose name was afterwards used by His followers as forming an excellent foundation for one more new religion; and if we had attached ourselves to this religion, and held a brief for this religion, and felt towards it as we might towards a favourite party or a cherished sect; *then*, indeed, we might be suspected of being conscientiously bigoted in proportion as we were conscientiously Christian.* But take your conception of Christ from the New

* I shall never forget the deep impression made on me at my Institution, by a prayer of the Bishop—"for the whole human race."

Testament. Realize what is meant by the first chapter of St. John's Gospel, by the Epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians, by the Epistle to the Hebrews, by St. Paul's sermon at Athens, by the whole book, and then see whether, together with a burning desire to proclaim His Name to mankind, there must not also be in the mind of a servant of Christ, a delighted readiness to welcome every good and beautiful thought, every maxim of justice, of purity, or of pity, every effort to bring about a peaceful although costly reconciliation of man to his Maker, and every dream of such a reconciliation of which he may find any record or traces in any of the religions of the world; and not only to welcome them, but to own them, as signs that the Word of God has not left Himself without a witness anywhere, and that He is preparing the hearts of men to lay hold on the news, on the Gospel, which they are anxious to hear,* and which we believe they all want.

(b) Again, when we are met by the assertion that the Christian Creed, like all other creeds, is a product thrown up by certain states of civilization, and that it represents the natural growth of

* See the preface to Mr. Holland's *Logic and Life*, pp. 7, 8, and also, Maurice's "Boyle Lectures," *passim*; a most invaluable book.

the human mind in particular stages of its career, and that it is destined to give way to other creeds as mankind becomes more enlightened, or possibly (although this is not quite so certain) to no creed, as mankind becomes perfectly illuminated, so that we may see all things in the clear light and with the dry eye of science; when we feel these thoughts in the air, even when the words do not reach us, the question arises, How can we best meet them? meet them so as to *satisfy* rather than *repress* them?

How, it is asked, do you proceed? What line do you propose to take?

Well, I must say here, let each man, be he clergyman or layman, meet these difficult questions in his attempts to deal with others, by the answers which he has found most permanently helpful in dealing with himself. My answer is this—I believe that we can translate your half-truth for you into a whole truth. The principle which lies at the bottom of these statements—statements which owe much of their influence to the prevailing popularity of broad historical generalisations conceived in the spirit and borrowing the terms of the scientific evolutionist—the principle, which these statements half conceal and half express, is one which we have ever recognised as fundamental—one to which we get a clue which is worth following further, when

we say that the Living Word of God was manifested in "THE FULNESS OF TIME." There was no infraction of any law, there was no arbitrary interference with the course of things, no change of mind in God, involved in that tremendous event which we call the Incarnation. The way had been preparing for ages, and whispers of what was coming had been overheard in every clime. Fables of incarnations, expectations of incarnations (without which the fables would never have been believed), dreams and legends of deliverers of men, the thirst for some sign that the Eternal was in communion with men, or that He could be put into communication with them by sacrifice or by pain and death, the ineradicable tendency of the human mind to feel after a God, to make for itself a God in human shape, and arrayed in the attributes of human beauty,—the desire, as with the Oriental, to lose the human in the Divine;—these, no less than the prophetic declarations of the seers of Israel,—these, no less than the long and painful preparation and education of the chosen race,—were all really precludings of the Incarnation of the Divine and Eternal Word. That there were myths, legends, phantasies of the human mind springing out of human misery and human hope, and that many of these remind us, as we read them, of the

Christian doctrine, this does not at all suggest the reasonableness of dismissing the Christian doctrine into the region of the unreal or the fantastic. The UNITY of the human race in every clime, in every age, in every stage of civilization,—this might well lead us to look for just such indications of that unity as these legends and phantasies present to the thoughtful student. Welcome all these indications of the anxiety of men to find some relief from pain, from the enduring sorrow of sin, some answer to their cry to Heaven for signs of sympathy and co-operation from above! Welcome all these obstinate struggles of the human race to assert its relationship to the one Supreme Ruler and Sustainer of men! Welcome these proofs that men have never been able to rest for long in the lower region of sense and of phenomena! God—such is our faith (such, if you will, is our superstition)—was thus speaking (nay, in many countries is thus speaking now) by divers portions and in divers manners through these unconscious prophets of the heathen world,—God, we say, even that one God, was thus speaking to others, Who has *now* spoken to us by His Son, by Whom also (no science contradicting *this*) He made the worlds.

We offer, then, a welcome to these unconscious prophecies of the human heart in every age. They help us to see that in human history, as in the

history of the material creation, a pathway is prepared. A divinely conducted evolutionary process is discerned now in all history. The human mind is being gradually adapted there for the reception of the Divine donation of Himself which God had purposed through all eternity, so that the Incarnation of the Word of God with all that flows from it—His life, His teaching, His sacrifice—does not come upon the world as a mere Wonder to strain the power of faith, or a mere dogma with no foot-hold in human instincts and with no voice for human needs. We should feel surprised, therefore, now, rather than gratified, if we found no signs in human history or in other religions that men had been visited by longings, and had suggested to themselves answers to those longings which, as guesses, or better, as glimpses of the true answer, help us to realize the process of “unconscious adaptation” by which the Manifestation of the Eternal Word was pioneered. We would not have had it otherwise than it is. Great events, like great discoveries, are always pioneered; for great events, like great discoveries, never take place by accident, although to the careless thinker they may sometimes seem to do so. The possibility of accident would exclude the possibility of the sure word of prophecy.

III. We have hitherto confined our view, in discussing this division of our subject, mainly to

the thoughts, the longings, the unconscious prophecies, of other religions in the past, or of races who have not yet been evangelized in the present. But now I wish to take a step further, and I wish to point out that there are utterances of men of *no* religion, of men, at any rate, who have lost their cradle-faith, which may be regarded as longings and prophecies which nothing but the Divine event of the Incarnation can satisfy. Take, for instance, that utterance of the late Professor Clifford which I quoted in a previous paper,* and which excited such evident sorrow in the minds of all who heard it. Surely, even in that utterance, we may trace the uneasiness of an unsatisfied mind, and an indication of the source from which alone hope and rest can come to it. I cannot help feeling that there, too, even in that shocking utterance of Clifford's, we may trace the human need of finding somehow what Dr. Westcott calls *Theanthropism*, and an unconscious homage to that Incarnation, all faith in which, in theory, Clifford had renounced. Clifford's soul was unable to part with God without a declaration which makes it clear he wanted to find a Being who was Eternal and yet Human, for his very life. He could not be content with an abstraction, nor with a "mist." He wanted, he

* See Paper I., page 21.

says, to see the face of our Father *man*. He gave involuntary evidence to the truth that the great Helper of man cannot be one who stands altogether "*outside Humanity.*" And surely our Blessed Lord, the Ancient of Days, the Everlasting Father, the *Man* Christ Jesus, standing not outside our humanity, but *very Man*, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting, is just the Helper which Clifford really longed for. Here, surely we may say, is the Helper from *within* "looking upon us with the fire of eternal youth." Here is the Helper whom Clifford's philosophy hindered him indeed from owning, but for whom, even his almost plaintive cry for help from within, was an unconscious prayer, an unconscious prophecy. I think he would have said so by this time had he lived. I feel sure he knows it now!

IV. But I see other indications in contemporary philosophical utterances of an unconscious thirst for the Gospel of the Word of God. I have used the phrase "Help from within," and I have alluded to the anxiety of men to find some relief and sympathy in the midst of pain and sorrow and sin. The sense of that pain and sorrow, the sense that there is something wrong which needs to be put right—something in men and in the world which makes the thought of life very sad, and crowds it with terrible liabilities to failure and agony,—this

has weighed often very heavily upon the human mind ; it has driven some men into hopelessness, others into a settled cynical contempt for their kind, others into blank atheism ; it is a view of things, too, or rather, a deep dissatisfaction with things as they are, and a recognition of stubborn facts, which has had no small share in producing that pessimist view of all life and nature of which I spoke in my previous Paper—that half-mocking, half-despairing feeling which finds vent in the philosophical dogma that proclaims this to be the worst of all possible worlds, or in the lawyer's irony, who would not lift his finger to save such a world from annihilation to-morrow.

Well, we take these dissatisfactions, these longings for deliverance, these alternations of despair and indifference, of horror and disgust, as further indications of the longing of man for Redemption, and of his perpetual craving, through the ages, for the time when it shall at last be made manifest that “the sufferings of this present season
“are not worthy to be compared with the glory
“that shall be revealed in us.” A consummation, I may add, which the best and tenderest of men devoutly trust may synchronise with the fulfilment of the prophecy that “the whole creation
“shall be at last delivered from the bondage of
“corruption into the glorious liberty of the children
“of God.”

But this is not all. I thank the pessimist for forcing upon me anew the conviction of what an awful thing it is to live. I thank the man of science for reminding me of the grim inequalities of Nature. I thank the scientific historian for demonstrating to me afresh the deadly struggles, the blood-stained battlefields, the cruel, crushing forces of wrong and lust, through which those who have gone before me made their way to liberty and to rightly ordered social life and true manhood, and bequeathed all this to their children and to mine to fight for and retain. I thank any man who makes me see that the world we live in is no *play-ground*, no holiday spectacle, but an arena of deadly conflict in which it is shame and ruin for any man, however humble, to trifle with his fellows or himself. I thank any man who reminds me, as the pessimist does, that there are moments when hope seems a mockery, and God's world left alone to make the best of a bad business, and when the echo of the curse seems louder than the whisper of hope.

No one who is listening to me now, no one who will ever read these words, should they be printed, can have felt the horror of such moments more deeply than I have, or have come nearer to the very jaws of despair. I thank God I have been delivered from despair, and so, too, from the cold and cynical indifference into some form

of which, as a refuge from torment, I should probably have allowed my mind to have become congealed. But what has saved me from despair and from indifference alike? The GOSPEL OF CHRIST has here, as in other cases, been the Power of God unto salvation for me. It has enabled me, or rather, He has enabled me, as He has done thousands upon thousands of perplexed and suffering men and women, to look the worst in the face steadily, and yet to hope and pray still for the great human family, which that same Christ assures me the Eternal Father still loves. Nay, I can even pray now for that whole sensitive creation, in which He tells me not a sparrow falls to the ground without His Father.

The ground of hope is in the very God, departure from whom and loss of likeness to whom, we can see now, was the original curse which has put all things wrong. (A doctrine, by the bye, of which I had glimpses when I found out that nothing but moral regeneration could cure even the physical ills of society.) Our only hope, I say, is in this God, and the news, ever fresh to me day by day, the news is, that we may hope in Him. "The Holiness of God incarnate in the flesh of
 "this labouring humanity, the holy image of
 "God's perfect Righteousness, taking upon Himself
 "the agony of man, accepting on His shoulders
 "the burden of all this awful woe, resigning His

“spotless spirit to the grief of all this bitter
“desolation, dying the death which justifies all
“death, in that it turns death itself, by the honour-
“able way of sacrifice, into the instrument of the
“higher inheritance,”*—all this seems to break
in upon my saddest thoughts, upon my dreariest
forebodings, and assures me that God has not left
His earth forlorn, nor refused to suffer with His
suffering family. His Gospel helps me to be
patient; helps me to labour. It arouses me from
my lethargy, it gives me an interest in my kind;
it makes the meanest man I meet of wonderful
account; it throws a gleam of glory upon every
sick-bed which I am commissioned to approach;
it makes me just able to bear to hear out to the
end the saddest stories of triumphant wickedness,
or of social wrong, and yet to feel certain at the
close that evil cannot triumph finally, and that
God cares, and has declared Himself.

III.

I. But, meanwhile, you may feel that it is time
to turn now to the results of *Criticism* and to the
alleged impossibility of finding any really trust-
worthy historical sources of information which

* Holland's *Logic and Life*, page 95.

can justify our notions of the Divine Character and Claims of our Lord. The matter is really very pressing, for we must not forget that we have to take account, not only of the influence of books, such as those of Renan and Strauss, or even of those learned and relentless German critics and historians, such as those whose names crowd the footnotes of "Supernatural Religion;" but also of that of popular lecturers and missionaries of secularism, such (*e.g.*) as Mrs. Besant and Mr. Forder.

We will turn then now to the *third* division of our former Paper, and I will ask you to read again, with care, that extract from Mrs. Besant's Lecture, in which we have the negation and the scorns of the higher critics popularized, and received by admiring audiences with loud cheers.*

If you will read again that report of Mrs. Besant's Lecture, you will find that she says there, "the difficulty is not to prove that Christ was believed to be an historical personage after the fourth century, but to bridge over the years between A.D. 1—300; you cannot carry the history of Christ and the history of the Gospel over that terrible chasm of three centuries." I draw attention to these words because I know, from experience,

* First Paper, p. 29.

that we have here an expression of an opinion which is held by no inconsiderable body of the working classes, and of an argument which is used in their controversies among themselves with considerable effect. It is, then, of great importance to the Church of the future, that this argument and this opinion should be fairly and fully met by the Christian thinker, and I am glad to see that it is announced that the "*Date and Credibility of the Gospels*," is to be the subject of one of the forthcoming Present-Day-Papers of the Religious Tract Society. Meanwhile, however, I think we may try to get people to see that there are a good many bridges by which this chasm of Mrs. Besant's may be crossed; and were it not that the Christ of the Gospels is obnoxious to Mrs. Besant's foregone conclusion, a conclusion which excludes the miraculous of any kind from the historical ground, I cannot help feeling that she would herself admit that we get across on much more solid ground than she is now disposed to allow.

II. *Bridge 1.*—Have we ever yet realized the incalculable value, as Bridges, of the EPISTLES OF ST. PAUL?

It is now twenty years ago, I should think, since the importance of the Epistles of St. Paul as independent primitive witnesses to the original, the supernatural character of the Christ of history,

was first forced upon my attention by a remarkable essay or sermon appended to Dean Stanley's "*Epistle to the Corinthians.*" His conclusion is, that if we had, up to this time, been readers of the Epistles only, and had now for the first time become acquainted with the Gospel narratives, we should be constrained to say, "We have found "Him of whom Paul in his Epistles wrote." It is not much, he adds (somewhat underrating, I cannot help thinking now, the force of his own reasoning), it is not much, but considering from whom these instances have been taken—from a source so near the time—most of them from writings whose genuineness has never been questioned by the severest criticisms, it is *something*, if it may suggest to any one a steadier standing place, and a firmer footing, of however narrow limits, amidst the doubts or speculations which surround him. I would earnestly recommend some of my brother clergy to work out for themselves the suggestions of that paper of Stanley's. For twenty years it has been an incalculable help to me from time to time, and has helped to make me feel, and to make others feel, that the Christ we worship is not a Mythical Personage, but the Christ of History. But there is another popular work upon the same subject, which has come out quite recently in the *Expositor* for 1881, a work the suggestions and citations of which ought to be

carefully studied, and the instances and proofs of which should be worked out carefully, one by one, by the perplexed Christian. The papers to which I refer, are entitled the *Historical Christ of St. Paul*, by Dr. G. Matheson. They contain, I venture to say, a most important contribution to Christian Evidences. If I had to preach now, as I once had the responsibility of doing, Sunday after Sunday, to a congregation in which there was a large infusion of thoughtful and educated men, I should hardly let a Sunday go by without making some effort in the pulpit to familiarise their minds with Dr. Matheson's method, and to prepare them for the ultimate acceptance of some at least of his conclusions. There would be no fear whatever of disturbing unnecessarily, or injuriously, the minds of the less thoughtful members of such a congregation. Reference would have, of course, to be made to the destructive criticism, or to mythical theories, or to the modern scientific disinclination to accept miracles as historical, but the minds of men of the world, to say nothing of thoughtful students, are perfectly familiar, at second hand if not at first hand, with these phenomena of present day thought. The air is full of the subject, and it gets a voice in the light literature of the fashionable philosophical articles and critiques in current Magazines and Reviews. In short, the lay-mind is much better acquainted with the

negative or destructive side of the critical argument, than we clergy are apt to imagine. With the constructive side of it, however, I do not think the laity are sufficiently acquainted, either through books or sermons, and this defect is one which it will be no mean part of the duty and privilege of the clergy of this generation to remedy, to the utmost of their power.

Well, then, you may say, admitting this duty to be incumbent upon us, what is the result of this revived effort to get behind the four Gospels? With the help of writers such as those I have named, I will endeavour to give an idea of a method of dealing with the Epistles of St. Paul, which shows their value as independent corroborative testimonials to the historical reality of the Christ of the Creeds. It is a method, of course, of which I can only hope to give the barest outline here, and one the full force of which no one can realize until he has worked it out piece by piece for himself. But still I think we shall find that ultimately, although not perhaps at first, we shall arrive at conclusions which will seem to make the words of Polycarp to the Philippians applicable to ourselves afresh. "The blessed and glorious Paul
"wrote letters to you, into which if ye diligently
"look, ye will be able to be built up to the fulness
"of the faith given to you."

What we want is a *fifth Gospel*; some indepen-

dent yet trustworthy evidence of the primitive historic conception of Jesus.

See, then, the interest of St. Paul's Epistles when we remember that we may regard them, especially those four of them which have escaped the scythe of the most jealous and sceptical criticism, as furnishing us with that fifth Gospel; when we remember that although now bound up in the same boards with our four Gospels, these Epistles are distinct and original sources of information, having all the charm and all the authority of documents of an earlier date of composition than any one perhaps of our four Gospels would be allowed to be considered to be, at any rate in precisely its present form.

Again, we want earlier dates. Well, here we have them! We are within twenty-five or thirty years at the furthest from the date of the crucifixion. And not only so, not only are the dates delightfully early, but the epistolary form will give us that advantage of *undesignedness* in the evidence to which Paley calls attention when dealing with these Epistles as corroborative of the history of the Acts of the Apostles. We shall then thus get unconscious testimony, testimony which springs forth incidentally, and testimony which is all the more convincing when we have once grasped it, from the fact that many of us have not been accustomed to look for it here. We shall not get

a great deal of detailed history, but we shall find a history underlying the allusions, the exhortations, the familiar greetings even, of a convert writing to correspondents who must have been already familiar with the history. The deeply interesting question is, what is this history? Is it in any essential features like or unlike the history of the Gospels? What, should we say, must Jesus have been, what His life, His teaching, His claims, His character, supposing we had no other sources than these Epistles from which to draw our portrait of Him, or from which to elaborate our conception of His nature and our doctrine of His Person?

From a careful perusal then of the Epistles to the Romans, the two Epistles to the Corinthians, and the Epistle to the Galatians (the four permitted Epistles), one is absolutely forced to acknowledge that the Jesus of the four Gospels cannot be the creation or the result of the various myths floating about, and ultimately in the second or even third century crystallised round the figure of Jesus of Nazareth. The historical Christ of St. Paul, as discerned through these Epistles, makes the mythical theory absolutely incredible. For what we gather from these Epistles taken together, and without reading a page of the Gospels, is this—

In the fulness of time our Lord was sent forth

from God,* born of a woman, and springing, so far as His human nature was concerned, from a Royal stock, a lineal descendant of the seed of David according to the flesh (His Messiahship not being, you see, an afterthought of second century theology, bolstering up, as some allege, its mythical phantasies by the construction of two irreconcilable genealogies). Ultimately, indeed, by an act which St. Paul refers to in the opening of his Epistle to the Romans (the Resurrection), Jesus was declared or determined to be *the Son of God*, but He came, notwithstanding this, and notwithstanding His royal lineage, in poverty, and was a Man of sorrows; so notoriously so, that the suffering and poverty of Christ are spoken of by St. Paul in a manner which takes it for granted that his correspondents were quite aware of them. But this marvellous Master of St. Paul is further declared by St. Paul to be born or *made under the law*. An expression which may fairly be said to be a pregnant and brief intimation, among other things, of the fact that Jesus was circumcised on

* The expression, "God sent forth His Son" (Gal. iv. 4), is generally held to imply the pre-existence of the Son. Bishop Lightfoot says it must not be pressed to imply also the unity with the Father. But in any case it is a very remarkable expression, taken in connection with its immediate context, "born of a woman," and *this* again is a very remarkable expression taken in connection with *that*.

the eighth day, and that after forty days He was presented in the temple. Again we infer from this expression of St. Paul, indicating as it does a conformity to all the ordinances of the Jewish ceremonial law, that at the age of twelve, Jesus must have passed through a probation such as awaited every Jewish child, and that He would probably be thirty years of age before He entered upon any public teaching.

So far the Pauline "Gospel of the Infancy," as it has been well called. Now we meet with a very marvellous impression produced by our Lord upon His disciples and contemporaries, that of His *sinlessness*. "*He knew no sin*" (2 Cor. v. 21). And we must bear in mind that this expression does not merely mean that He led a blameless life. It is quite clear that the impression of our Lord's sinlessness must have been one of the most tremendous of all possible thoughts to a Jew, to whom the thought of sinlessness was associated only with the character of the eternal Jehovah. The way, too, in which St. Paul speaks in Romans iii. of the *propitiation* which God set forth Jesus Christ to be, bringing in, as he does, that celebrated declaration, immediately after his sweeping statement that *all* have sinned, renders it impossible to imagine that he could have thought of Christ as any other than the only one who had ever been fashioned as a man, upon whose soul, even in the

eyes of God, there was no taint of human corruption. Let it be remembered that we are not concerned now with the *doctrine* of the sinlessness of Christ nor with that of His propitiation. We are only concerned with the evidence afforded by St. Paul of the current belief among Christians in the lifetime of the Apostles, as to the nature and person of Jesus of Nazareth, a belief, be it observed, which was clearly held by them prior to the date of these Epistles. Does not this consideration seem to help us out of the "mythical" theory? But even this is not all. In this matter of the sinlessness of Jesus of Nazareth, I think we can go further back than even this, and that, too, without touching one of the four Gospels at all. From St. Paul's descriptive account of the Institution of the Holy Communion by Jesus, we have, as it seems to me, *Christ's own words*, as there reported, in corroboration of this awful claim made for Him by His early disciples; words which seem to prove that He had not this honour, of which we speak, thrust upon Him by the overwrought imaginations of His followers. May I ask you to turn to the eleventh chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians and, just for one moment, before we touch the central point of interest, see what St. Paul tells us by way of allusion, as to the time, and as to an important incident, of that Institution? It is the earliest

written record, remember, of the Institution of the Holy Communion, but it is plain it could not have been the first time that the detailed history of it had reached the ears of Christ's followers at Corinth. This is how St. Paul puts it: "I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus (the Jesus of history) the same night in which He was betrayed took bread." You see he is not telling them "Jesus was betrayed," and betrayed in the night. He alludes to this matter as one well known, and only alludes to it in order to mark the time of another occurrence. Does this look like a "myth"? But to resume the main topic before us. Passing by all the many natural reflections which arise in the Christian's mind, as he recalls the scene of the night of the betrayal, think of a dying man saying this to Jews: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood." The covenant was, as has been said by Dr. Matheson, the most awful thing that could be named. It expressed, it connoted to the friends of Jesus the whole secret of the relation between man and God. To introduce deliberately a *new* relation, to proclaim Himself then and there to be the ground and the mediator of that new relation with Jehovah, to speak of the pouring out of His blood as the initiation of that new covenant—was not this to advance an awful claim to sinlessness, to a life in which there was

no flaw? I conclude in language that is better than any which I can use: "Here is a portrait of
" a Man belonging to a race, of all others the
" most impressed with the consciousness of human
" depravity, and standing Himself in the immediate
" presence of death, which is wont to lay bare the
" secret of all souls; yet in the very midst of His
" race, and in the very presence of death, declaring
" Himself, by a life of unblemished sinlessness, to
" have bridged the chasm between the human and
" the Divine."

(I made some quotations in my previous Paper which shocked you. This one which I have now made will go far to compensate you for that pain.) But to continue. Do we wonder after this that we find St. Paul assuming that wherever Jesus is acknowledged, that wherever a saint or, as we should say, a Christian, is found, there Jesus is worshipped with a worship such as no true Jew could have offered to any being but to Jehovah? The assumption that this was the kind of worship *then* offered to Jesus Christ by the universal Church is certainly manifest in these words of greeting to the *Corinthians*, "with all *that call upon the NAME*
" of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place." The very expression, "call upon the Name of the
" Lord," could not have been taken to mean anything less than this worship, by a Jew, who remembered its Old Testament connotation. And

St. Paul's words in the tenth chapter of the Romans, from the first to fourteenth verse, will help to bring this fact very vividly before our minds if we read them side by side with this greeting to the Corinthians.* Of course it may be said that the existence of this worship does not prove that it was not *an idolatry*. I am not here concerned with this objection. Our contention is, that this worship of Christ was so common, so universal, among His disciples, and so common among them within twenty-five years of His crucifixion, that it is alluded to then by St. Paul in a letter, acknowledged to be genuine, as something well known and which excited no wonder, and which must have been in existence for many years. And, further, we contend that this worship of Christ at this early date seems only a reasonable service in men who believed in Him at all, and who accepted any version or account of Christ's own tremendous assertions of His claims which bore any essential resemblance to that contained in St. Paul's narrative of the Institution of the Holy Communion. We learn, then, from these early and

* See Bishop Pearson on the Creed, Article ii., "Our Lord." "For the true notation of the word," says Pearson, "it will not be so necessary to inquire into the use or origination of the Greek, much less into the etymology of the correspondent Latin, as to search into the notion of the Jews." The whole article is interesting.

authentic documents, that the Christ, the Messiah, of history, was one who claimed, and who received, an acknowledgment of His sinless personality, of His Divine authority and power, from all His disciples. And this lesson is one, I may add, which is deepened and confirmed by the further consideration, that He seems to have authorized them to go to the length of placing His own name beside that of the Great Father and of the Divine Spirit (2 Cor. xiii. 14) in their most solemn acts of benediction.

So far then as to His Person. Now can we learn anything further as to the nature of His teaching and disposition while on earth? And still clinging to the same Epistles, and still keeping the four Gospels closed, can we infer anything as to the character or condition of His early disciples and as to any other well-known incidents in our Lord's career?

And first as to the nature of our Lord's teaching generally. It is clear from St. Paul's Epistles, that although He claimed to be the *Messiah*, our Lord spiritualised the conception so that the kingdom of God was never to be dreamed of as a *rival* of that of the Cæsars. Christ's kingdom was one of righteousness and peace and of spiritual joy. His Messiahship was to be sealed in His own Blood, not in that of others in conflict with the kingdoms of this world. And St. Paul must

have had some precept of His Lord before him, to which he attached supreme authority when he wrote, "Render therefore to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour" (Rom. xiii.). If this maxim had been merely an idea of his own he would have said so. He would have said something analogous to the words he uses in treating of the subject of marriage: *I*, not the Lord (1 Cor. vii. 12).

Again, as to our Lord's teaching, as to His whole attitude, with reference to the LAW. Here, too, we find that our Lord must have fulfilled the law and yet spiritualised it, and that St. Paul, speaking *in Christ*, must have learned from Him that *Love* is the fulfilling of the law. "What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, *God* (did) by sending His own Son. Thus condemning sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit" (Rom. viii. 3, 4). Christ's teaching then must have been an expansion of the LAW, and must have given a new power of obedience to His disciples, a power working from *within* outwards. He must have made it more awful and yet more sweet, more spiritual and therefore more practical, than the law of Moses. The 12th and 13th chapters of the Epistle to the Romans may be taken as specimens

of the spirit of Christ's teaching, of His practical and spiritual application of His own Divine precepts of the law. St. Paul invests these moral exhortations, which cannot too often be read and pondered, not with his own authority, but with his Lord's. He speaks here, he says, through the grace of God given unto him, to members of one body in *Christ*. He sums up his pleadings by a command which evidently embraces all that he has been saying, in one sentence: *Put ye on the "Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for "the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof!"*

The Christ of the Sermon on the Mount was with him, so that he spoke with authority here, and not as the scribes.

But we must hasten to the conclusion of this branch of the subject. We certainly, standing on this Bridge of the four permitted Epistles, have already seen enough to convince us that the Jesus Christ of the Gospels is not the mythical crystallization of the second or third centuries. We cannot open and read these early, these almost contemporary letters, without finding ourselves in the very thick of allusions, of statements, of exhortations, of assumptions, which drive us to the conclusion that the Christ of real history is also the Divine claimant of the worship and the love of mankind, and that His whole life was *one grand miracle*. And this is perhaps enough for

our present purpose. It may be interesting, however, just to mention, as we proposed, a few more features of His character and a few further incidents of His career before we pass on; features and incidents which we may gather from these Epistles and which may help, indirectly at any rate, to confirm our faith, by helping us to realize the unity of the New Testament.

We gather then from St. Paul that his Lord was TRUE, and that He must have left a profound impression of the reality of His character, of the trustworthiness of His every utterance, upon the mind of His disciples. We are so familiar with some of the expressions which imply this that we are apt to pass them over. "I say *the truth* in "Christ, I lie not" (Rom. ix. 1), as if the very thought of Christ transferred His members into the atmosphere of truth and of sincerity. "As "the *truth* of Christ is in me" (2 Cor. xi. 10). "In Him was not yea and nay, but yea and "Amen" (2 Cor. i. 20). An echo almost, one "would say, of the *Verily, Verily*, the "Amen, "Amen, I say unto you," which we know so well, of the "I am the way, the *truth*, and the life," of the *mythical crystallisation*.

Our Lord too was infinitely *wise*. "He was "made *wisdom* unto us."

He was utterly unselfish. "Even Christ *pleased* "not *Himself*" (Rom. xv.).

He was *meek and gentle*. "I BESEECH you by "the *meekness and gentleness of Christ*." It was not a mere ideal excellence but a definite character, well known to his correspondents, and one upon which he could ground an appeal.

He was *Love*, the infinitely endearing Charity. "The *love of Christ constraineth us*." "Who "shall separate us from the *love of Christ*."

These allusions to the love of Christ are the more suggestive when we recall St. Paul's high ideal of love (1 Cor. xiii.) We see from that chapter that the love of Christ would include His long-suffering, His kindness, humility, unselfishness, the absence in His character of envy or jealousy or ill-temper, of peevishness or passion, as well as the conspicuous presence of that meekness and gentleness already referred to.

So much as to St. Paul's view of Christ's character. Let us pass to the mention of a few of the later incidents in our Lord's history—and in that of His immediate followers. Besides those already noticed, of His birth and early childhood, and of His betrayal, and of the Last Supper, we gather from St. Paul's permitted Epistles, that our Lord was crucified, and that this crucifixion took place under the authority and sanction and through the instrumentality of the princes of this world. The final blow at His life was struck by the Gentile Power, and this under a mistaken notion of Christ's real

character and claims ; had they known Him they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. We learn that He was buried, and that on the third day He rose again. We have also a full and interesting notice of events subsequent to the Resurrection. Jesus was seen of PETER,* then by the twelve (an expression by the bye, which, used in this way without any comment or explanation is strong proof of the original number of the Apostles, and of the general use of the term in St. Paul's day), then by five hundred brethren the majority of whom were alive when Paul was writing, then of *James* and then by *all* the Apostles. We learn also, by an incidental allusion in Rom. x., that our Lord *ascended*. We learn, finally, that St. Paul had, by some means, been assured that the risen and ascended Christ was the all-discerning and righteous Judge before whose judgment-seat each man would be made manifest at last.

Now open the Gospels. And before you read them, tell me, do you expect to find there a simple Jew who went about teaching (this and no more), or will you be surprised to find the simple yet

* St. Paul had made personal acquaintance with St. Peter (Gal. i. 18), and had no doubt heard the full account of this appearance from Peter's own lips, during the fifteen days that these two strangely different and sometimes differing men had met at Jerusalem.

sublime record of One before whom we fall in adoration and in wonder as our Lord and our God? Nay, further yet.

Will you not be surprised now if you do not find in those Gospels the story of such an awful, yet gracious Being, one with God and one with our suffering humanity, such as He must have been whom St. Paul's letters have prepared us to expect?

I said, "now open the four Gospels." But perhaps I said so prematurely. At any rate, I am quite willing, for the purpose of this argument, that we should now close them again and wait awhile, holding as it were in solution the lessons which we have thus far learnt while we turn to look for another bridge across the chasm. Accepting then St. Paul's doctrine of the Person and work, of the nature and the claims of our Lord, such as we have seen that doctrine to be, let us look about for some links of connection between that doctrine and the faith of the Church such as it can be proved to have been a hundred years afterwards; in the last quarter of the second century. Ask for evidence, if any there be, of the *permanent hold*, which the doctrine of the Person of Christ, whether derived from St. Paul or any other sources, really had upon the Church of God. Seek an answer to *this* question (still keeping your Gospels closed);

what thought they of Christ during those hundred years? Was it another Christ? Was it, I mean, a Christ with another nature, with other pretensions, with another and less miraculous history?

III. EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITINGS (*Bridge 2*).—Turn to the Christian writings of this period. Turn to see for yourself who and what is the Christ who stands out in clear relief in the pages of the early Fathers, of the apologists, of the heretics, even if you will, of that century. The materials may be comparatively limited, the evidence may come to us in a somewhat different form from that which we may have expected; but still, see, is it not the same historical Christ to whom we are introduced all through? See whether here, or anywhere, you can find any traces of a Christ who was other than that awful, that sublime, that supernatural Saviour, in whom alone St. Paul and all Christians of the first century, all Christians since the Resurrection, have recognised their Lord.

When this is done, then open your Gospels again, and see whether you are not forced to the conclusion "*This is He*. He and no other! He "and no less!" It is the same Jesus! Nay, see further, whether you are not now struck with *this* fact, that in your long and steady reading of the Christian literature of these hundred years, you

find upon looking over your notes that (with a few unimportant exceptions) you have added nothing to that knowledge of the sayings, or of the details of the life of Christ which you might have obtained from these four Gospels alone, short and fragmentary in form as they seem to be, had you relied upon them as your sole source of information at the first.

Then ask one final question: May it not, after all, be true that these four Gospels moulded the second-century traditions of Christendom, and not the traditions the four Gospels?

This last question I put last because it must come last, in the method of bridge-formation, which I wish here to recommend.

This method which I venture to suggest to you, I may add, is one which I have tried for myself, and one which I believe will help us to help others to find a firm footing for their faith. It is one, too, which will make the truth more vivid to the mind than a mere on-looker would at first suppose. Since some of my friends got frightened by the author of "Supernatural Religion," I have felt that the first great question is, not that of the authorship or date of our Gospels, important as this is, but that of the *substantial identity* of the original Christ with the Christ of the Catholic Church. What we want to know is, whether, in accepting the Christ of Christendom, we are on

the track of fables or of facts. And in this inquiry we cannot do better than take warning by the weighty words of Dr. Westcott, who tells us that we are in danger, when endeavouring to meet this question, of losing sight of the real point at issue by diverging to a discussion on the canonicity of the four Gospels. "For Christians," he goes on to say, "the Gospels have their special religious significance, but for others they are simply records of particular facts. The truth of the facts is in this latter case the one question to be settled; and not any theory which may or may not have been held as to any books in which the facts are narrated."*

It is to avoid this danger that I venture to suggest to those of us who are brought face to face with modern unbelief, a method which begins with an investigation of facts as they can be made out apart from our Gospels, and then goes on to compare those facts with the four Gospels. I know that, at first, we may seem in this method to be ceasing the quest for evidence of the genuineness or authenticity of these invaluable documents; and so we are for *a time*; but this evidence will come to us with a much more attractive and decisive force if we seek first the answer

* See Dr. Westcott's Preface to the fourth edition of his "Canon of the New Testament," page xxxv.

to the fundamental question: Who and what is the real Christ of History? And I have put our minds at peace to start with, by beginning with the "*Epistle* bridge," upon which we may feel firm, as we are busy with the early Christian literature from, say, Clement of Rome to Justin Martyr (inclusive).

Only do let us try this method, not merely recommend it. Do let us persuade people to read for themselves these works, not merely to read discussions about them either on one side or the other. They are, many of them, easily accessible to even the English reader, and they would form very instructive and interesting readings with which to vary a course of Lectures on Early Church History, a course, by the bye, in which we might thus take care that the people should hear the right side first upon this subject, instead of their hearing the wrong side (as we cannot but call it) first, from popular secularist lecturers or pamphleteers.

But be this last suggestion as to popular readings and lectures applicable or not to the case of any of our parishes or congregations, one thing is quite certain, that no mere statement of results such as I could find room for in this Paper could adequately convey the total general impression which will be indelibly left upon the mind of any candid man who will take the trouble to go through

the process for himself. Yet read what follows as a summary of what may be gained from the study of the Apostolic Fathers alone,—Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, Barnabas. The words are Dr. Westcott's :

“The Gospel which the Fathers announce
“includes all the articles of the ancient creeds.
“Christ, we read, our God, the Word, the Lord
“and creator of the world, who was with the Father
“before time began, humbled Himself and came
“down from heaven and was manifested in the
“flesh, and was born of the Virgin Mary, of the race
“of David according to the flesh; and a star
“of exceeding brightness appeared at His birth.
“Afterwards He was baptized of John to fulfil all
“righteousness, and then, speaking His Father’s
“message, He invited not the righteous but sinners
“to come to Him. Perfume was poured over His
“head, an emblem of the immortality which He
“breathed on the Church. At length, under Herod
“and Pontius Pilate, He was crucified, and vinegar
“and gall were given Him to drink. But on the
“first day of the week He rose from the dead, the
“firstfruits of the grave, and many prophets were
“raised by Him for whom they had waited. After
“His resurrection He ate with His disciples. He
“ascended into heaven, sat at the right hand of
“the Father, and thence He shall come to judge
“the quick and the dead.” There are also in

these Fathers numerous parallels to the discourses and precepts of our Lord reported in the Gospels.*

The only thing which should be added here, because it is better that people should hear it first from us, is that there are no references to any specific miracles of our Lord in the Apostolic Fathers. But we should recollect that all miracles are implicitly included in the Incarnation and Resurrection of Christ. And, further, as Dean Plumptre has shown us in his introduction to the *Acts of the Apostles*, we have in *that* work a similar reticence and vagueness in this respect, and yet it is quite compatible there (and why not here) with a full and intimate knowledge on the part of the author of many of the specific miracles of Christ.†

But it is when we reach the works of *Justin Martyr* that we seem to get more thoroughly into the stream of Christian history, of citation, allu-

* As *e.g.*, Polycarp to Philippians, c. ii., "remembering *what the Lord taught us*, saying, 'Judge not that ye be not judged; forgive and it shall be forgiven unto you.'" No chapter or any Gospel is quoted, or any Evangelist by name referred to; this was not the method of the time. But this does not *at all* affect our general argument here.

† With reference to the specific miracles, the well-known fragment from the "Apology of Quadratus" might be cited to show that in the early years of the second century our Lord's miracles of healing and raising the dead were well known.

sion, argument, which makes it quite certain to my mind that the Christ whom we worship now is the Christ of History, and not a mythical crystallization of the third century. Even supposing we admit, for the moment, what we do not admit, that there is no proof that our Gospels were used by Justin Martyr (A.D. 140) at all. He certainly presents to us a Christ who is in all essential features of His nature, His claims, His teaching, and His history, the same as that whom St. Paul's permitted Epistles call upon us to follow, whom the Creeds of Christendom have taught us to confess, and whom we shall read of in our Gospels when we open them again. But here, even more than in the case of the early Fathers, no mere isolated citations, no bare statement of results, will produce the impression which I have stated, or convey an adequate idea of the profound conviction which a careful reading of Justin Martyr will leave upon the mind. But do not, I venture to say, try FIRST to make out a case for our four Gospels from Justin Martyr; let that case stand over a little, and you can come round to it subsequently. The first great question is: What thought he, what taught he of Christ? Get a clear and definite answer to that question from him first; an answer which will be the more satisfactory and conclusive from the fact that he does not pretend to be the deposit or the expounder of

any new discoveries or revelations on this subject, but simply to represent the faith of all Christians, —the worship, the creed, of his time.

IV. But I must draw to a close my few hints upon this division of my Paper. I wish it could have been made more suggestive than I am afraid it will be, of that method of meeting the critical difficulties of the day, which I think will be found most availing in the long run. Before, however, we proceed to the next and last branch of the entire subject of this essay, there are two general observations which I would ask to be allowed to offer.

And first, although I have said that the finding of the historical Christ should be the first object of our search in the Patristic and Apologetic studies, I by no means wish it to be inferred that I wish the other line of inquiry, that into the evidences of the early use and existence of our four Gospels, to be dispensed with as superfluous. It is, on the contrary, one of very great interest and importance. And I will just add a few hints as to some results which may be expected.

(1) A careful study of the report which Eusebius gives us of the testimony of *Papias* (who was probably a pupil of the Apostle St. John), may fairly be said to form an excellent *introduction* to this critical inquiry, and due weight must be attached to the close proximity of this Father to

the Apostolic Age, and to his intimacy with the daughters of Philip the Apostle. Careful attention also should be paid to the accurate translation of the Greek title or description of his celebrated work, "An Exposition of Oracles of the Lord."* The fact, too, should be grasped, that he was an expositor and not an historian, and one therefore who did not pretend to *exhaust his subject*. He makes no claim to completeness, and we cannot therefore conclude from his silence as to any oracle or gospel, that it did not exist or was not known in his time. Weighing these preliminary considerations carefully, it is difficult to persuade oneself, after reading the words of Papias, that neither St. Matthew's nor St. Mark's Gospel was in existence in his day—in existence, I say: I do not say active circulation.

(2) Again, when we take up distinctly and separately the inquiry into the date and authenticity of our four Gospels, great attention should be paid to the light thrown upon the subject by the charges brought against *Marcion*, an early heretic, you remember, still teaching when Justin Martyr wrote his first Apology. Even if we refuse to give much weight to the charges of Marcion's adversaries, it is a significant fact that they always charge him with *mutilating* something which

* Not *the* Oracles.

already existed. That something certainly included our Gospel according to *St. Luke*. It will be of great assistance also to observe that the author of "Supernatural Religion" now admits that Dr. Sanday has convinced him that our third Synoptic existed in Marcion's time, and was substantially in the hands of Marcion, and that, therefore, the existence of our Gospel of *St. Luke* prior to A.D. 140 is proved. But if this be so, then surely our third Synoptic was in *Justin Martyr's* hands, although, in accordance with the general usage of his time, and especially in accordance with that of the apologetic writings of the early ages, Justin Martyr does not cite it by name.

(3) But a still more important contribution to our means of forming a correct conclusion as to the early date and circulation of our four Gospels, one indeed of the most interesting that I know of, will be found in *Tatian's* "*Diatessaron*."

Tatian was a hearer, if not a disciple, of Justin Martyr, and like Justin Martyr a convert to the faith of Christ. During Justin's lifetime Tatian remained in communion with the Catholic Church. He subsequently became a well-known heretic. But the interesting point for our purpose is the discovery of an Armenian commentary written by *St. Ephraem of Edessa* (A.D. 373), upon this "*Diatessaron*" of *Tatian's*. This discovery is due to the publications of Mechitarist monks at

Venice, and the contents of this commentary prove beyond all reasonable doubt that the Diatessaron of Tatian was a concise compilation of our four Gospels, and it brings to us just that valuable evidence of the connection of Tatian's Gospel with those in our Canon, which the author of "Supernatural Religion" sought for but could not find. We are forced now by this discovery to the conclusion that in *Justin Martyr's* time all our *four Gospels* were in *existence*, and, to some extent at least, in circulation among Christians. In order to realize the importance of this result, I advise my hearers to read carefully a series of important articles by Dr. Wace, in the *Expositor* of 1881,—on *Tatian's Diatessaron*, and to put them into the hands of any intelligent layman who may be anxious to see for himself some evidence of the way in which contributions towards the settlement of modern critical doubts are being made by the care and learning of contemporary scholars and divines, such as Bishop Lightfoot and Dr. Wace, Dr. Westcott and Dr. Sanday. Ultimately these careful contributions, although they may not attract popular attention at first, will tell upon the people at large, and be recognised as of general and abiding importance even by practical men of business.

V. This last remark brings me to the second and last class of observations, which I asked

to be allowed to offer before passing to the brief reconsideration of the last main division of our Paper.

I have alluded to the value, the practical value, of contemporary scholarship and learning among the recognised leaders of the English clergy. The more one knows of what is going on in the secularist camp, or in critical literature, the more one feels impressed with the need there is among us of an ever increasing number of men whose lives are devoted to critical investigations, and upon whom one can rely for the results of thorough, impartial, and original methodical research. But this is not all. We want something more as well. We want a large body of studious clergy who are capable of assimilating these results readily, and of transmitting popularly, what they have gained from headquarters, to the minds of the masses of the people. A good deal of this transmission will have to be done by lectures, speeches and sermons ; some of it, surely, by an adaptation of that invaluable method of public "Bible-readings" in which the present Bishop of Lichfield, while he was Vicar of Kensington, rendered such invaluable service to so many educated men and women of West London ; some of it, again, may be done by men, of whom may God send us many more than we have got, who are capable of writing trenchant

and impressive pamphlets and tracts. In order, however, to carry out such a work as this we must largely increase the number of highly educated and fairly learned clergy, and we must also have an increasing body of clergy who are interested in the course of modern thought and of modern philosophical and moral speculations, and in the tendencies of social and political theories which abound among us at this time, and which are profoundly modifying men's views of religion. In short, we want a large body of clergy capable of bringing out of their treasures things new and old, to help us here. And how are we to get such a body? *I do not know.* I only know that one way not to get them is to talk and write as if such a body of men would have an easy time of it, and to confine the epithet "hard-working" clergy to that very valuable body of men who are good organizers, good men of business, good popular preachers, good ecclesiastical musicians, good and industrious Ritualists.* All these are very valuable adjuncts and helps to us. But do not let us assume that no clergy who cannot be brought into this latter category of Church workers, can do much hard work, work which will *tell* in future

* I need perhaps hardly say that I do not use the word "Ritualist" here with even the suspicion of an opprobrious connotation.

generations as well as in this for the Master of the vineyard, and for the Church and Realm of England.

IV.

I. And now I am led by a not unnatural transition to offer a few words in conclusion upon the moral aspects of the whole subject upon which we have been engaged. Those of you who heard or read my first Paper will remember that I called distinct attention to the not unreasonable apprehension with which many thoughtful men cannot help looking forward to the ultimate influence upon morals of the popular Atheism and Materialism of our time.

The materialist philosophy, the predominance of the physico-chemical view of man, the loss of all vital faith in the existence of an Eternal Person to whom, in the last resort, each man is responsible,—all this seems only too likely, even against the expressed wish and the living examples of many of the more eminent leaders of this Modern Unbelief, to give a terrible stimulus to the darker side of our human nature, and to lend the aid of philosophical plausibilities to the ethics of self-indulgence and the creed of lust. And in the present condition of society no one can say that we want any fresh stimulants for the

animal appetites or any philosophical shelters for that *φρόνημα σαρκός*, which some do expound the wisdom, some sensuality, some the affection, some the desire of the flesh. What I am afraid of is, that fresh stimulants and fresh excuses are being fast furnished for those who want to take the lower line, and that to those who are tempted to live to themselves or to seize the bribes of the flesh, reasons are being provided for the hope that is in them that they may do it with impunity if they do it with prudence.

I am not alone in this opinion, nor is it a mere clerical scare. "I cannot imagine," says one of my correspondents, a layman, a careful observer of men, a man of wide and liberal views, and accustomed to great affairs, "I cannot imagine
" any style of preaching more attractive to half-
" educated or to dissolute men and women than
" that which you quote (from Mrs. Besant and
" others), while there are others who have no
" time to give to the consideration of metaphysics
" who are fascinated by the new negations, not
" sorry to be relieved from the disturbing in-
" fluences of early teaching, and who do not wish
" to have any fresh sanctions of morality put in
" the place of those from which they rejoice to feel
" themselves freed." When a man of the world speaks thus you may feel sure matters are becoming serious, and the gravity of the situation

appears to be this, that, under the new *régime*, the very sternest reproof which you can administer to the very vilest, the very worst of men, is one in which you can charge him with having made a miscalculation, or what the majority consider, or have agreed to punish, as a miscalculation. Pleasure, more or less refined, being the only God, and pain, more or less intense or enduring, being the only devil, such an one has, you can assure him, taken a line of action through which, again in the opinion of the majority, he has gone badly to work to secure the favour of the one and to avoid the grip of the other. But I do not see how, if he holds out like a man, and a logician, you can get any further with him than this. With the new ethics triumphant, and when in the third or fourth generation, the old religious and ethical superstitions have been thoroughly bred out of men, I do not see how you are to produce those initial feelings of shame, that initial sense of sin and of personal responsibility which is the true preliminary, at any rate, to individual and social Regeneration.

Let it be distinctly understood that I do not want to use the weapons of invective. When we thus speak we are only exposing what we feel to be the inevitable *tendencies* of the new Ethics of Materialism, and the block which they will ultimately lay in the road of moral progress, if

they are to remain in that road to the third and fourth generation. To avoid hurting any one's feelings, let us go back eighteen hundred years, and bring out, in this way, the difficulty of arousing upon the negative and attractive assumptions of the Materialist or the Secularist Ethics, even the indispensable initial feelings of shame or of guilt.

II. Let us see what a consistent disciple of the Secularist Ethics could have said to St. Paul, had St. Paul only had the weapons of the Epicurean Materialist or of the Physico-Chemical Moralist, in his hands. We shall see at a glance how strongly entrenched Felix would have been, how unanswerable his defence would have been, even had St. Paul confronted him with the biting bitterness of *Tacitus*, who tells us that Felix was a man who "*per omnem sævitiam et libidinem jus regium servili ingenio exercuit.*"

If pleasure and pain are the sovereign masters of the universe, where was there any room for *blame* of Felix, who, on his own principles, and upon the (presumed) principles of the Apostle, could have demonstrated the prudence and the providence with which he had arranged his life, so as to get out of it the largest possible amount of pleasure and the least possible amount of pain or of inconvenience?

If St. Paul had addressed to him a remonstrance on the ground that a larger amount of pleasure was to be obtained from the spectacle of a well-

ordered and justly governed province than could possibly be extracted from that of a people preyed upon and cruelly and wantonly farmed, for the purpose of finding fuel for the passions, or food for the cupidity of the governor, Felix would have had his answer ready. “Pleasures and pains are
“ matters of taste. The synthesis of organs
“ (which the vulgar call Felix) experiences no
“ sensations of pleasure so intense, and so self-
“ regarding, as those which the present line of
“ life procures. These sensations of pleasure
“ may not perhaps last quite so long as those
“ to which that synthesis of organs called Paul
“ wishes to habituate the synthesis called Felix.
“ But it prefers, or, to adopt the metaphor of the
“ metaphysician, ‘I’ prefer intensity to duration.
“ That may be an imprudence, a mistake, from
“ your point of view, but neither from your point
“ of view nor from mine can it be what is vulgarly
“ called a *sin*. The only mistake which I am
“ afraid of, is that of incurring the wrath of
“ Cæsar. But I have a brother at court, a power-
“ ful synthesis of organs, upon whose influence
“ I can depend for the favourable adjustment
“ of my relations with the Imperial authority.
“ This Cæsar’s wrath is the only judgment to
“ come I have any need to dread, and against
“ this I am insured. Sensation, we are agreed,
“ ceasing with the organs of sense, nay, if there

“ be a soul, I myself ceasing with the scattering of
“ that soul’s exceedingly fine particles, there can
“ be no pain which I cannot at once put an end
“ to, when life becomes intolerable, by embracing
“ what even the rigid Stoic calls the *καλὴ ἐξαγωγή*
“ of suicide. Responsibility, too, ceasing with
“ my power to answer, and with the dream of a
“ Living Judge and Ruler beyond, to whom any
“ answer can be given, what you call my con-
“ science may be reasoned into peace and re-
“ strained from paining menow, without any super-
“ stitious dread of its reviving, in the future, any
“ of the remonstrances or torments of the past.”

I have thrown the picture back into the past for a moment to avoid mentioning living men with disparagement. But I see in that picture a warning of what we may come to, or of what, when all godliness is bred out or whipped out of our children’s children, *they* may come to, if we do not mind what we are about. The fact is, we cannot reason with the present generation, or with any generation of men, upon righteousness, temperance and judgment to come, upon any such retrograde and pagan principles as those in which, in the name but not with the sanction of science, we are sometimes invited now to take refuge, and which are offered to us as substitutes for those Divine sanctions here and hereafter which it is proposed to explode. And hence the

gravity of the situation, and the need of living, preaching, and writing in the full consciousness of its gravity; hence, too, the need of foresight and of insight on our part, that we may act as good "watchdogs" of Christian civilization and of moral progress, and point out faithfully to men, even at the risk of seeming impertinent alarmists, the *retrograde tendency* of much of the popular philosophy and of the whole Secularist view of life and of society. I think that if we realize the situation thus, even yet, some of the missionaries of Secularism will be got to see that they are advocating principles which, if universally or generally accepted and acted upon, will put the world backward instead of forward, and evolve us downwards instead of upwards, nearer to the ape and to the dust than to the ideal manhood towards which all pure and ardent souls must ever yearn.

III. But be this as it may, I yet feel that in dealing with the great mass of the people it is just here, on the *moral* ground—just here, where there lies the shadow of our darkest apprehensions—that we may find the materials of hope. Here, in the inner man; here, in each man's conscience, we may be sure, if our creed be true, there are sparks of celestial Light which may be fanned into a flame, if we are wise. Let us always deal with men upon the supposition that our creed *is* true, let us always appeal to them as to those in

whom the Spirit of God is bearing witness and seeking to convict and to convince them of sin and righteousness and judgment. Let us always assume that we have a Divine Ally in every human heart. He is not far from any one of us, philosopher or critic, secularist or atheist, priest or prophet, even although we may refuse to recognise His Presence or to listen to His Voice within.*

As we appealed at the outset to the witness which each man bears within him as to his own mysterious personal identity, and used that witness as an introduction to the argument for the existence of a Supreme Intelligence, a Person, a living God in Nature; so now, in the last resort, we still may appeal to this consciousness of personal identity, and to the ineradicable, although often withered, sense of personal responsibility which accompanies it, as a witness to each man of the Living Judge, and of the righteous retribution which awaits him. And surely the appeal will not be in vain for ever, especially from the lips of those who are commissioned to proclaim

* When I was vicar of Shoreditch I often took down the Baptismal Register Book, and looked steadily at the name of "CHARLES BRADLAUGH" there, and prayed and wondered about him. The answer I generally got was this—"The Spirit of God has not done with Charles Bradlaugh yet."

that the Judge is also the awakener of the conscience, yea, the Eternal Friend and Saviour and Fellow-Sufferer, who "has grieved as men, and "like slain men been slain."

God help us to treat men, to speak to men, to live, nay if He sees fit, to die, so that we may co-operate in living and in dying with this inward Monitor, this silent Reprover, this Lord of the conscience of each man—with this Eternal Lover who loves too dearly to let men alone. God help us! For what we want is to strike the conscience, and yet revive the spirits, of men; so to preach Christ that all may see and make their children see that He, who to all sin must ever be a consuming fire, is yet to all sinners the God of Hope!

The task is tremendous, but we will not despair; for not only have we, as I have said, an ally in each man's conscience, but we have, also, a Life, a Sacrifice, an Act of God, which at one and the same moment reproaches and ennoble men.

"Through sacrifice to higher life." We thought we saw this law written in the works, and gradually revealing itself in the long and often painful processes, of "Nature." Ultimately, I believe, we may be led to trace the operation of an analogous law in the history of man, and in

the dealings of God with us from generation to generation. Every act, every course of action, every life, which has been, in a willing and conscious agent, an illustration of this law of Sacrifice, a homage to this principle of progress and of ascension, has had a Voice for some one. It has addressed itself with silent eloquence to that which is characteristically and essentially human in us. It has struck the conscience, and yet has fired the spiritual ambition of men, so that they have been inspired to make a demand upon themselves for something higher than their former self—for a life, often, which should in some respects, at least, correspond to that conception of life and of duty by which the original Sacrifice had been inspired, and by which the tone of the mind had been sustained at that high pitch which alone could have conducted it to such a grand consummation. And if this be so, surely we may feel that such a Life and such a Sacrifice as that of Jesus Christ (the Word of God, the Son of Man) are pre-eminently calculated to arouse the conscience, and yet to inspire the heart with hope, if once men can be got to see Him as He really was and is. Such a Life, such a Character as this, seems to be in itself the very warning, the very "threat," if you will, which we need, that a life of selfish trifling, of degrading animalism, of faithlessness to one's highest calling

must, if persisted in, end in Hell, in the pain and shame of a man degraded and separated from his highest, that is from his only proper, condition, that of proximity to God. But at the same time there also is this grand Power in such a Life, especially when you remember *whose* as well as what it was, that with the very message of expostulating urgency and of crushing reproach, it brings another message, that of righteous mercy, of infinite pity, and so of hope ; a promise and potency of recovery—of Heaven—*here* and hereafter.

I say of heaven *here*, for truly, notwithstanding Dr. Aveling's pamphlet,* I believe that *utter trust* of Christ, the practical and universal adoption, for one generation, of the principles, the *ἠθος* of Christ's Life, and of His teaching, say, in the Sermon on the Mount alone, would make earth a heavenly spot for all succeeding generations of men. But as this cannot be, I will venture to affirm, still in spite of Dr. Aveling, that in *proportion as men become more Christian they will become more human*. I say they will become *more human*—less brutal, less cruel, less cowardly, gentler with others, sterner with themselves ;—less factious, less bigoted, less scornful ; less given to exasperating epithets, to bitter thoughts, to

* Cf. First Paper, page 44.

bitter words, to devouring lusts, to vindictive reprisals, to secret impurities. As men become Christian, they will be more truly men; and earth being freed from some of its deadliest curses, will become more heavenlike. As men become more Christian, we shall get rid of the many superstitions, the many mocking infatuations, of Mammon worship, and of the corroding cares of faithless anxiety, and of half at least of the horrid temptations, which those infatuations and those cares breed in men and women, to offer their souls for sale or to buy the souls of others, as they would chattels in a shop.

But there is no room here for more hints as to the bearing of the Character, the Teaching, the Authority of Christ upon the future happiness and peace of this world. I hope one day to publish a volume of discourses on the Sermon on the Mount, in which this fertile topic will be more fully illustrated and enforced. I will do no more here than just add my profound conviction that a greater mistake cannot be made than that of supposing that because our Lord brings another world into light, and brightens the hope of immortality, His teaching and His word are not for this world too, and for men and women now and here. The truth is that the very character which is essential for the future world is the very character which here, in this world, is

the salt of the earth, and that without which we can have no hope of true progress and true happiness below. What must be for heaven, will not only do, but will be the very best conceivable gift, for earth. A generation utterly Christian is our grandest hope for man even if when we die all is over, even if human life stopped dead at the grave.

In conclusion then, we repeat, the moral ground is one at once of the very gravest anxiety, and of the very liveliest hope. We have still, in CHRIST'S presence in man's conscience, our hope; in His Life, His teaching, His Sacrifice, our mightiest instrument, with which to touch the conscience and to revive the moral and spiritual aspirations of men. God help us to use this instrument; to hold up this Divine Character to the hearts of this generation. But if we are not capable of doing this work for Him and for our fellows, may He find some others that are.

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